Shojo Beat Manga

BABY & Me

Story & Art by

Marimo Ragawa

18

Shojo Beat

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Vol. 18

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Shojo Beat Edition

Story & Art by
MARIMO RAGAWA

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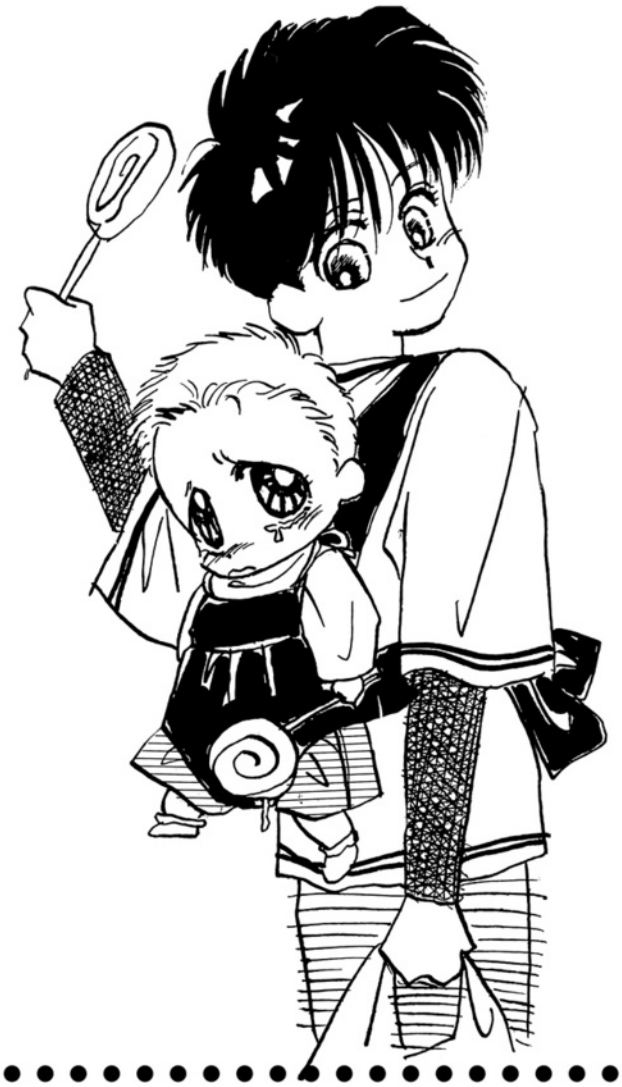


BABY & ME

Creator: Marimo Ragawa

SBM Title: *Baby & Me*

Date of Birth: September 21

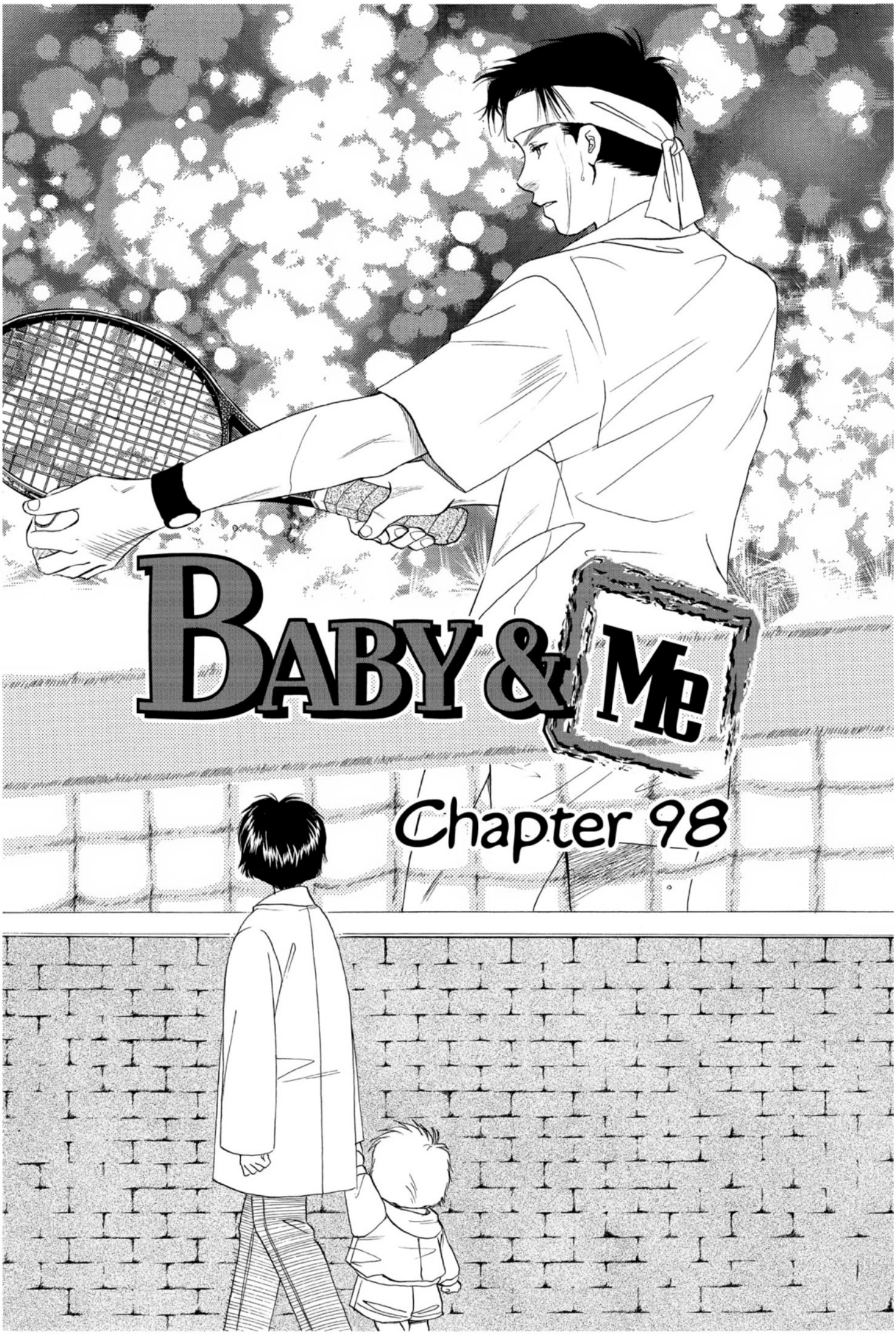
Blood Type: B

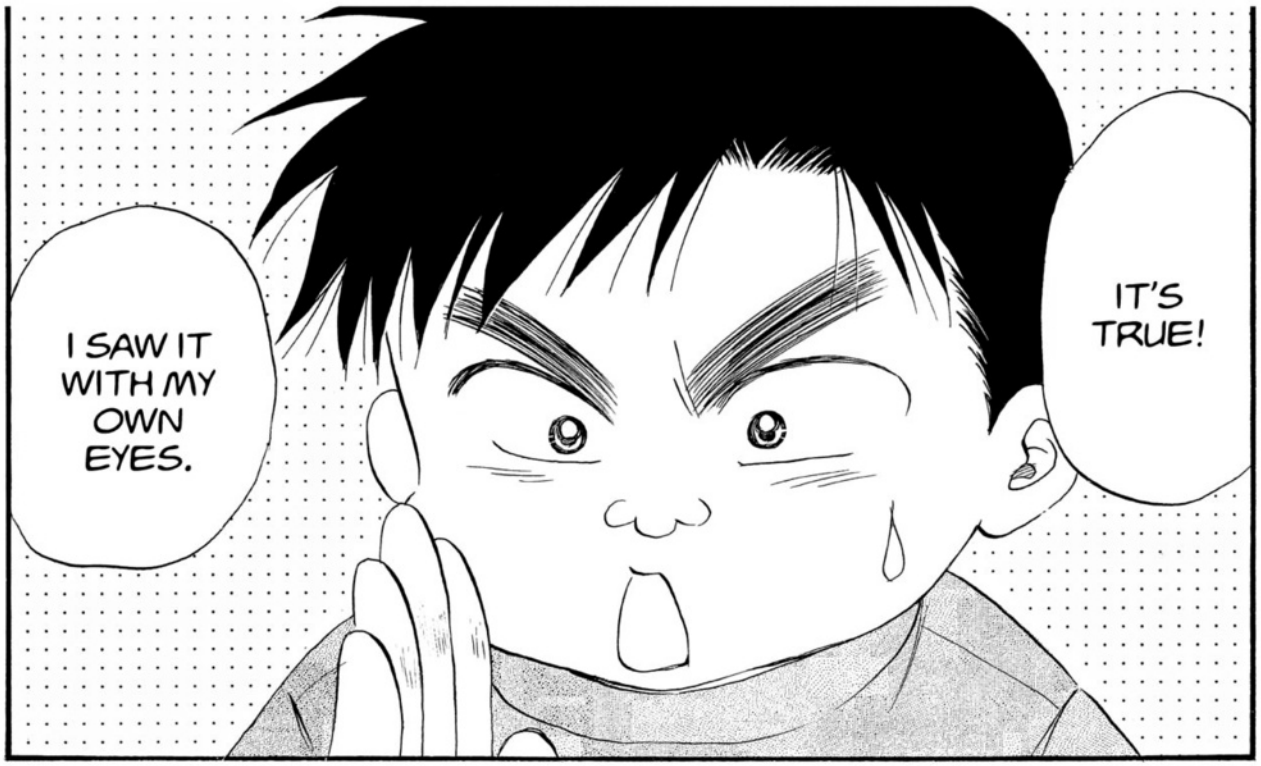
Major Works: *Time Limit*, *Baby & Me*, *N.Y. N.Y.*, and *Shanimuni—Go* (Desperately—Go)

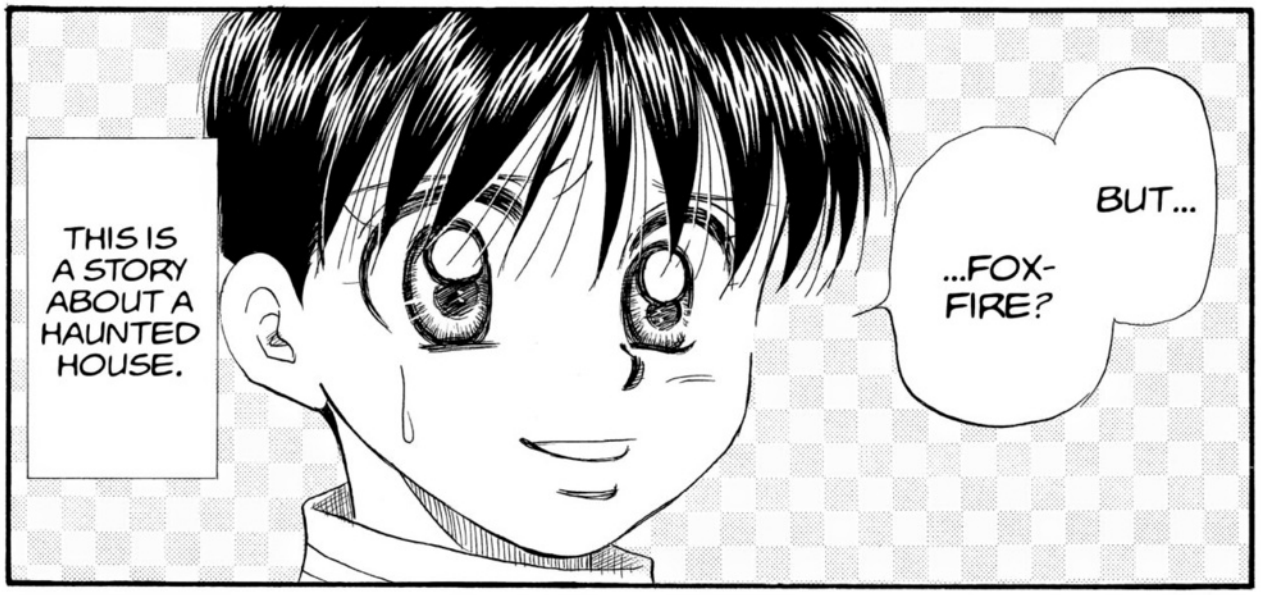
Marimo Ragawa first started submitting manga to a comic magazine when she was 12 years old. She kept up her submissions for four years, but to no avail. She decided to submit her work to the magazine *Hana to Yume*, where she received Top Prize in the Monthly Manga Contest as well as an honorable mention (Kasaku) in the magazine's Big Challenge contest. Her first manga was titled *Time Limit*. *Baby & Me* was honored with a Shogakukan Manga Award in 1995 and was spun off into an anime.

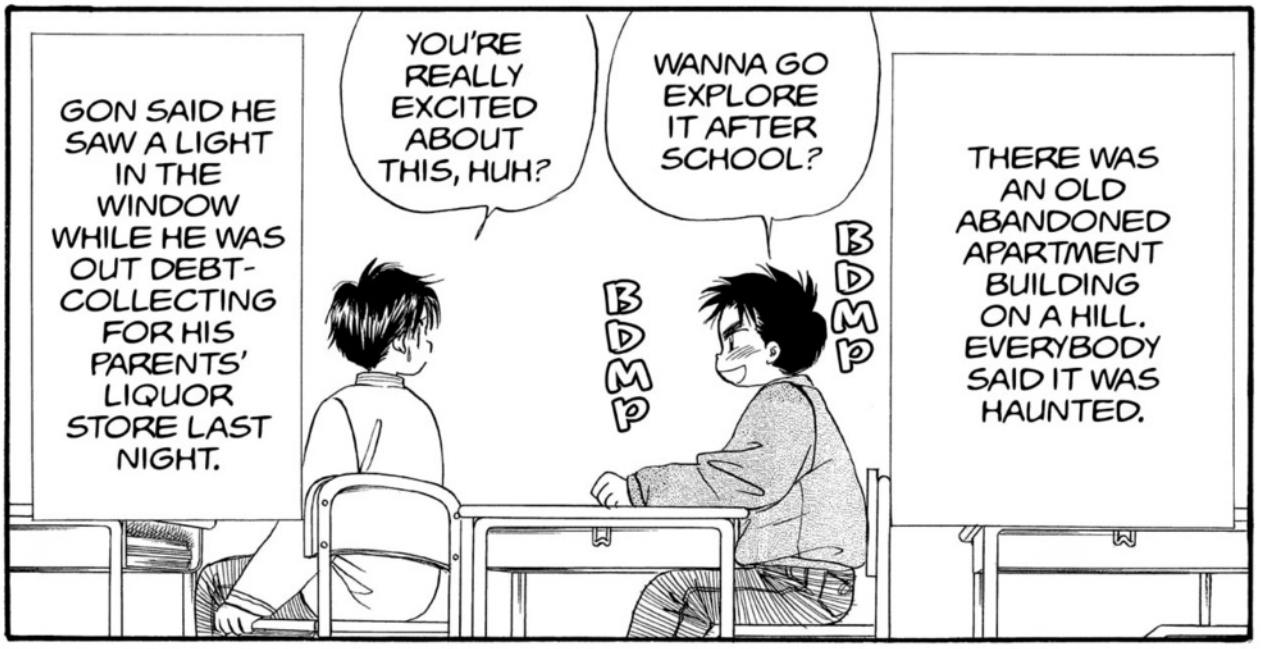
Ragawa's work showcases some very cute and expressive line work along with an incredible ability to depict complex emotions and relationships. Some of her other works include *N.Y. N.Y.* and the tennis manga *Shanimuni—Go*.

Ragawa has two brothers and two sisters.

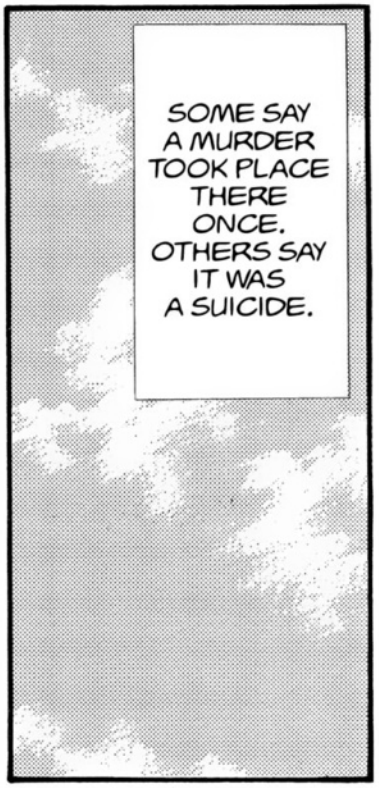

BABY & Me
Chapter 98


I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES.
IT'S TRUE!


THIS IS A STORY ABOUT A HAUNTED HOUSE.
BUT...
...FOX-FIRE?


GON SAID HE SAW A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW WHILE HE WAS OUT DEBT-COLLECTING FOR HIS PARENTS' LIQUOR STORE LAST NIGHT.
YOU'RE REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS, HUH?
WANNA GO EXPLORE IT AFTER SCHOOL?
BDMP
BDMP
THERE WAS AN OLD ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING ON A HILL. EVERYBODY SAID IT WAS HAUNTED.

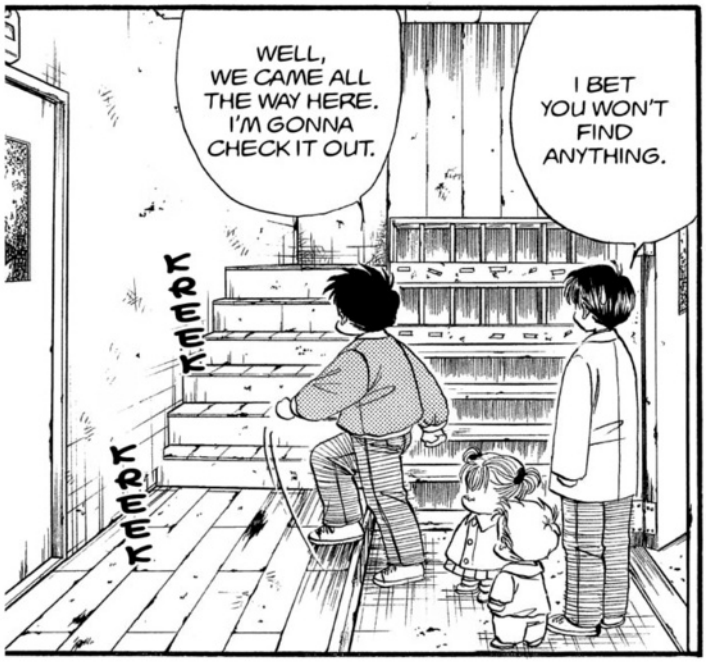
GLOOM


SOME SAY A MURDER TOOK PLACE THERE ONCE. OTHERS SAY IT WAS A SUICIDE.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
UM... THAT ONE.

WHICH WINDOW WAS THE LIGHT IN?

...


WELL, WE CAME ALL THE WAY HERE. I'M GONNA CHECK IT OUT.
I BET YOU WON'T FIND ANYTHING.
KREEK
KREEK

WE'LL BE FINE! IT'S NOT EVEN DARK OUT YET.
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO IN THERE, GON?
BWAZA! SCAWY!

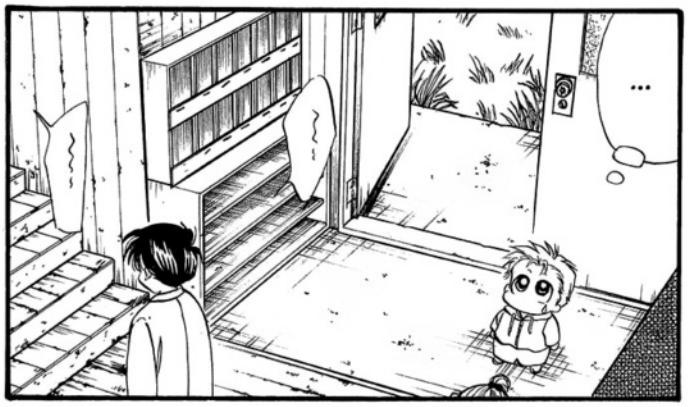
HEY! I FOUND A BALL!
HUH?

MAKE UP YOUR MIND.
NO!!
I GO TOO!
WAAH

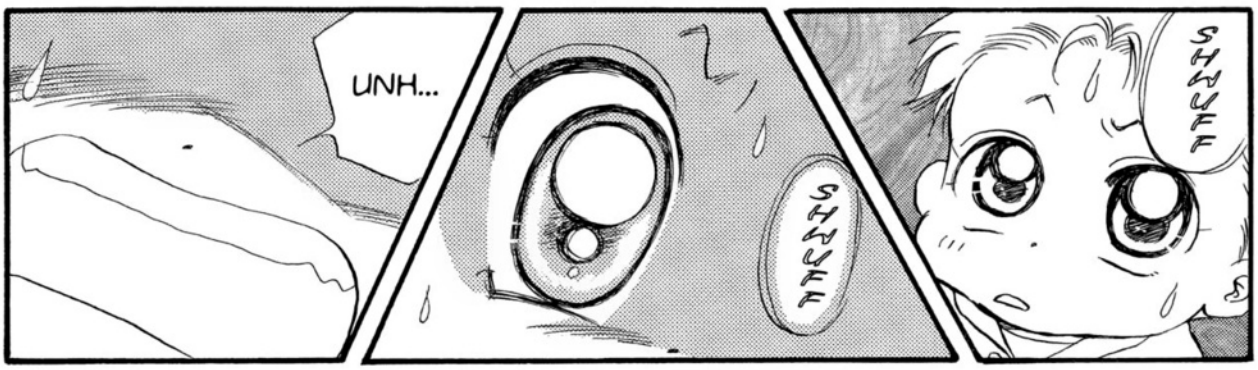
OKAY. YOU WAIT HERE, MINORU.
NO! IT'S SCAWY!
YEAH.

A MYS-TERY...
BUT HOW'D IT GET HERE?
THAT'S A TENNIS BALL, RIGHT?

SHUUUT


...

LOOK, TAKUYA, I FOUND THIS ON THE STAIRS.
IT'S BRAND NEW!
IT'S YELLOW...


UNH...
SHNUFF
SHNUFF

GON
?!
THWAP
WAAAH!! BWAZA!!

KA-CHAK
ZAAT
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? GEEZ!

Y-YOU SCARED US!
BDMP
BDMP
M-MINORU!
GWAAH
A GHOS'!! A GHOS'!!

HUH?
WAAH

KREEK

KREEK
KREEK
KREEK
KREEK
GWAAH
I DON'T KNOW. IT'D HAVE TO BE A PRETTY BIG MOUSE.
KLAK
LATER GON SAID, "MAYBE IT WAS A MOUSE."
IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO FINALLY CALM DOWN.
WHEN WE HEARD SOUNDS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR, WE RAN FOR IT.

MAYBE I DROPPED IT BACK THERE.
THWAP
OH.
I CAN'T FIND MY KEY.
HUH?
SWF
HUH?
SWF
WAIT HERE, OKAY?
KREEK
IT SHOULD BE AROUND HERE.
KREEK
BWAZA ...
KREEK
KREEK
KREEK
DID IT FALL IN A CRACK?
KREEK
KREEK
I CAN'T FIND IT.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
...
HMM... IT'S SO DARK IN THERE.
NANO NANO
KREEK
KREEK
...THIS?
COULD IT BE...
KLINK

Author's Note Part 1

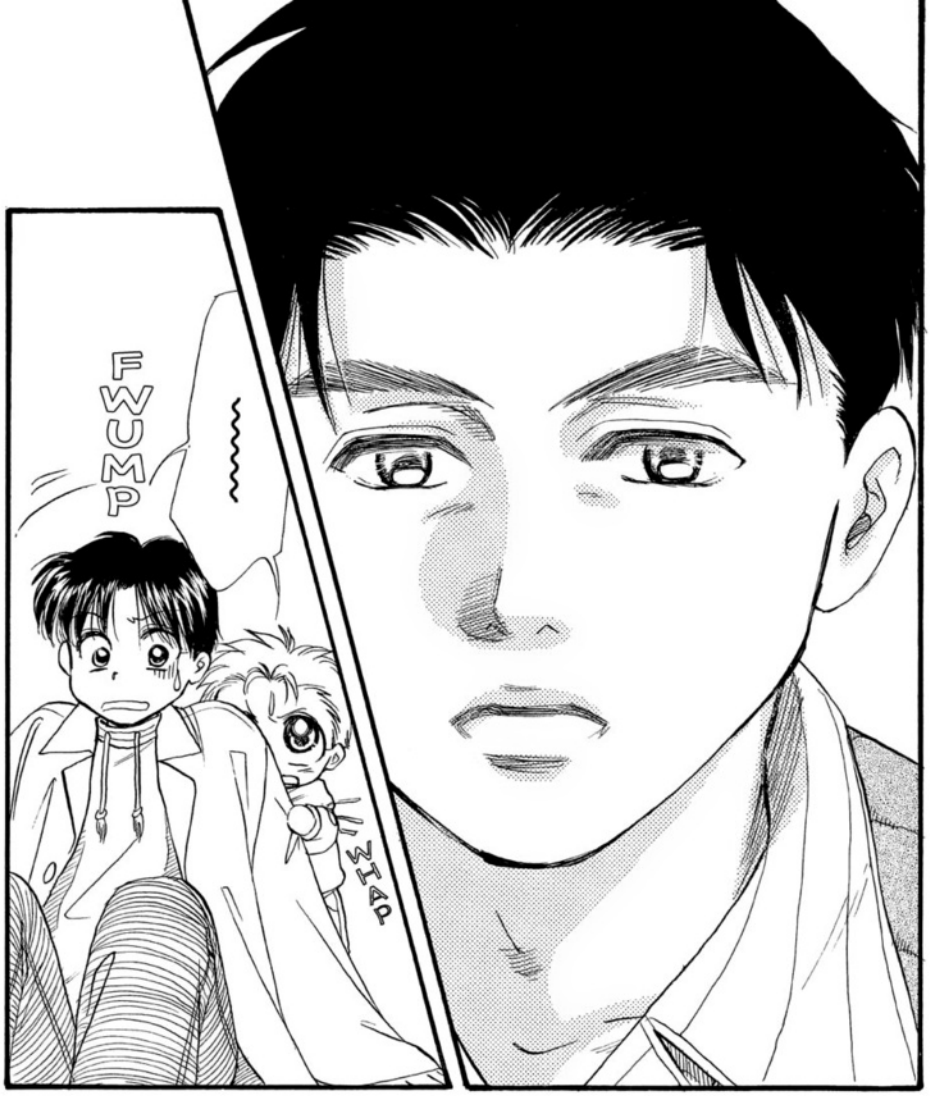
Hello, it's Marimo Ragawa. Since this is the final volume of *Baby & Me*, I wanted to put a lot of work into the cover and the extras.

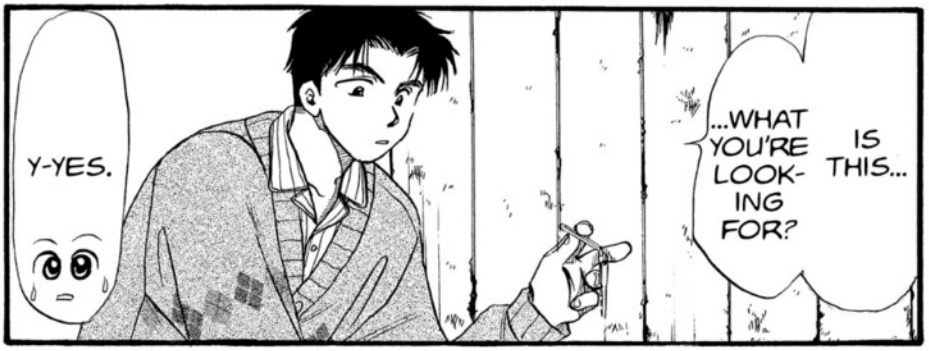
But if you think I have a little free time now that *Baby & Me* is finished, you're wrong.

I'm still very busy on other manga projects.

▲

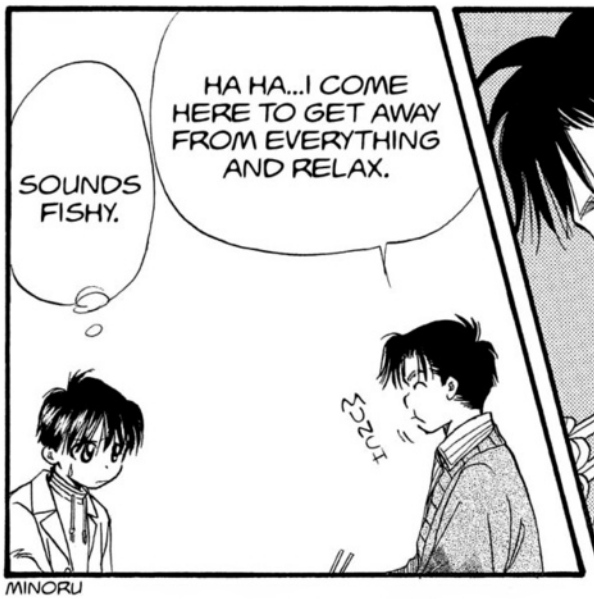
Typical Ragawa... I get a lot of mild fevers and have a hard time sleeping, yet I never lose weight. Why is that?



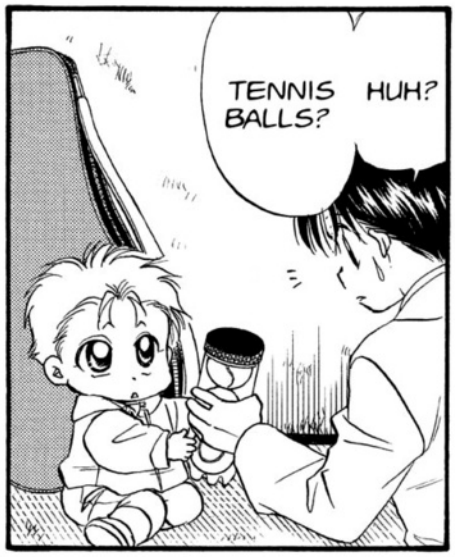


GURGLE
I'M SO HUNGRY.
I'M STARVING TO DEATH.
I CAN'T...
...THANK YOU ENOUGH!
LUNCH
WHAT?
I CAN'T.
THERE'S NO GAS, ELECTRICITY OR WATER HERE.
YOU DON'T LIVE HERE, DO YOU?
THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST GO BUY YOURSELF SOME LUNCH?
IT'S... COMPLICATED. I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE GOING OUT, I GUESS.
EEP
THEN WHY DON'T YOU COOK SOMETHING?

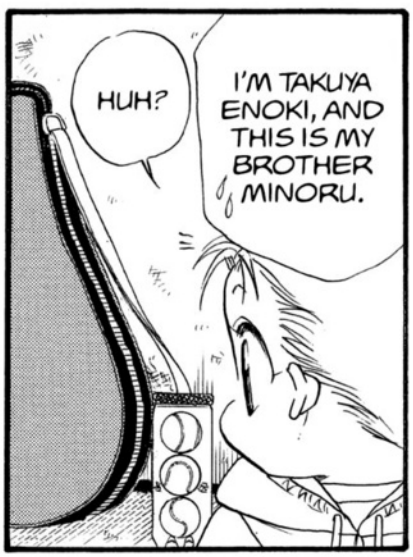
I'M...
...
CHIHIRO MO-MOGAKI.
NICE TO MEET YOU.


HA HA...I COME HERE TO GET AWAY FROM EVERYTHING AND RELAX.
SOUNDS FISHY.
MINORU

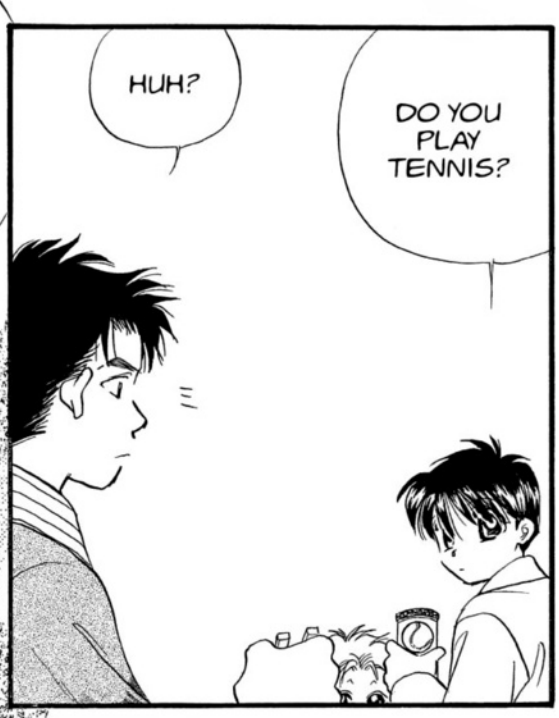
...

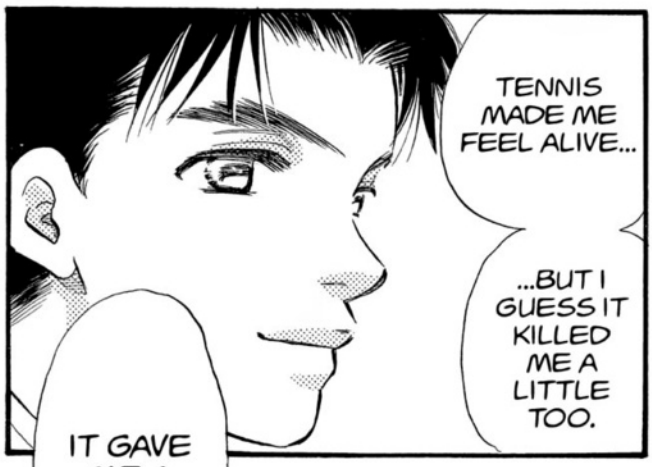

TENNIS BALLS?
HUH?

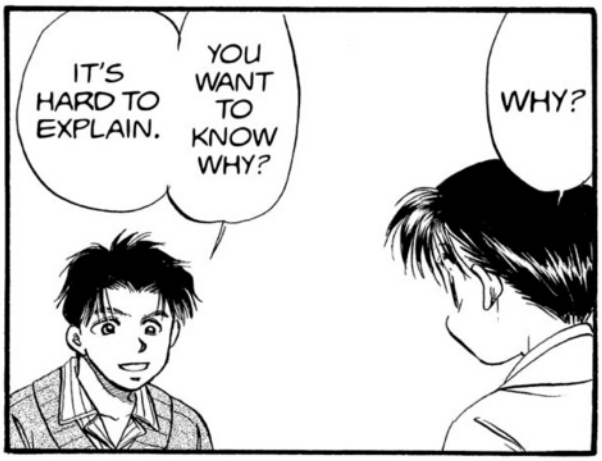
MINORU, DON'T TOUCH OTHER PEOPLE'S STUFF!
OH!
AHH!
TUNKA
TUNKA


HUH?
I'M TAKUYA ENOKI, AND THIS IS MY BROTHER MINORU.

I DON'T KNOW.
I USED TO, BUT I'M THINKING ABOUT QUITTING.


HUH?
DO YOU PLAY TENNIS?


TENNIS MADE ME FEEL ALIVE...
...BUT I GUESS IT KILLED ME A LITTLE TOO.

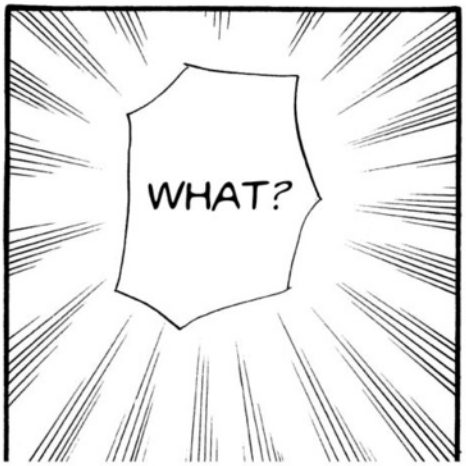

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.
WHY?

IT GAVE ME A LOT...
I ENDED UP SACRIFICING TOO MUCH FOR IT.
...BUT IT TOOK A LOT AWAY.

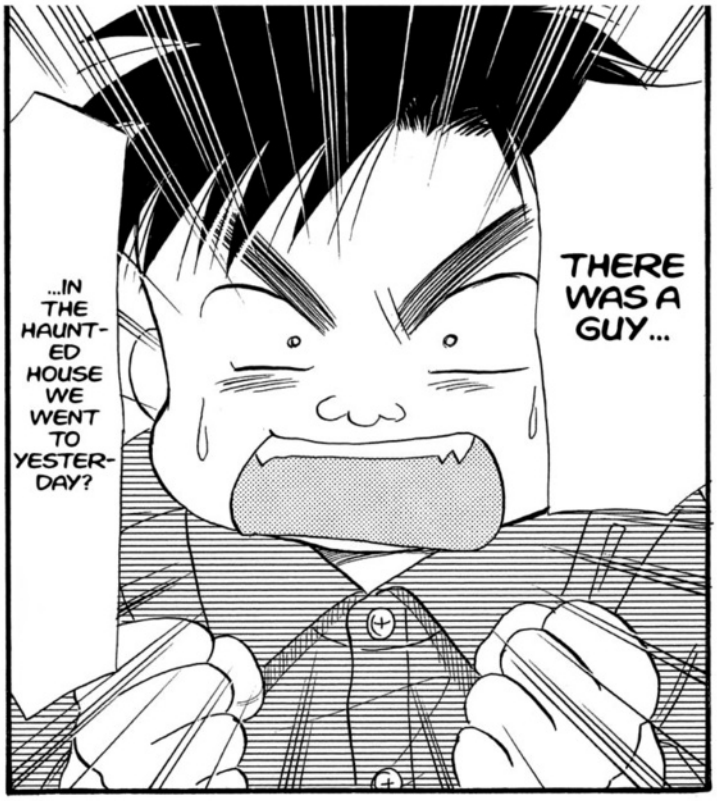
THE NEXT DAY...
YACK
YACK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

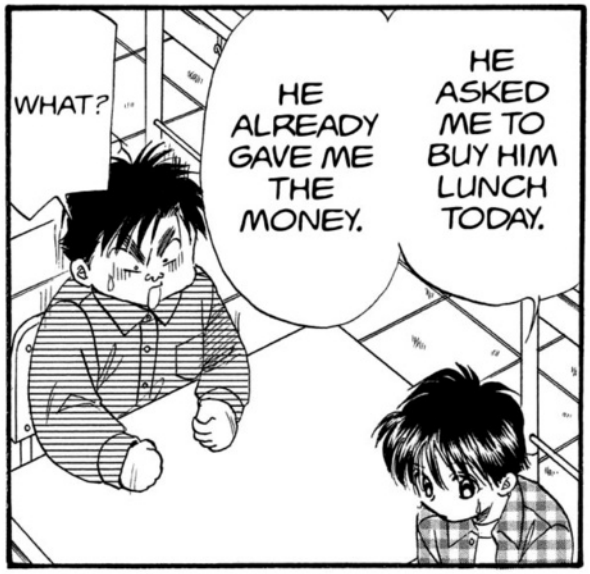
I STILL WASN'T SURE WHAT HE WAS DOING THERE.
WELL, HE WASN'T A GHOST, WAS HE?
NO.

SO...
...MAYBE THIS LONELINESS IS MY PUNISHMENT.
KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I DIDN'T GET IT.


WHAT?

IT SURE SOUNDS SUSPICIOUS...
HE'S PROBABLY A CRIMINAL!
HE GOES THERE TO **RELAX**? I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
...BUT IT SEEMED MORE LIKE HE WAS **HURT**.


...IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE WE WENT TO YESTERDAY?
THERE WAS A GUY...


WHAT?
HE ALREADY GAVE ME THE MONEY.
HE ASKED ME TO BUY HIM LUNCH TODAY.

BUT WHAT?
BUT ...

NOTHING HAPPENED AND WE DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY, OKAY?
LET'S FORGET ABOUT IT, TAKUYA.
EITHER WAY, IT CAN'T BE SAFE.

I'M GOING WITH YOU.
AND...

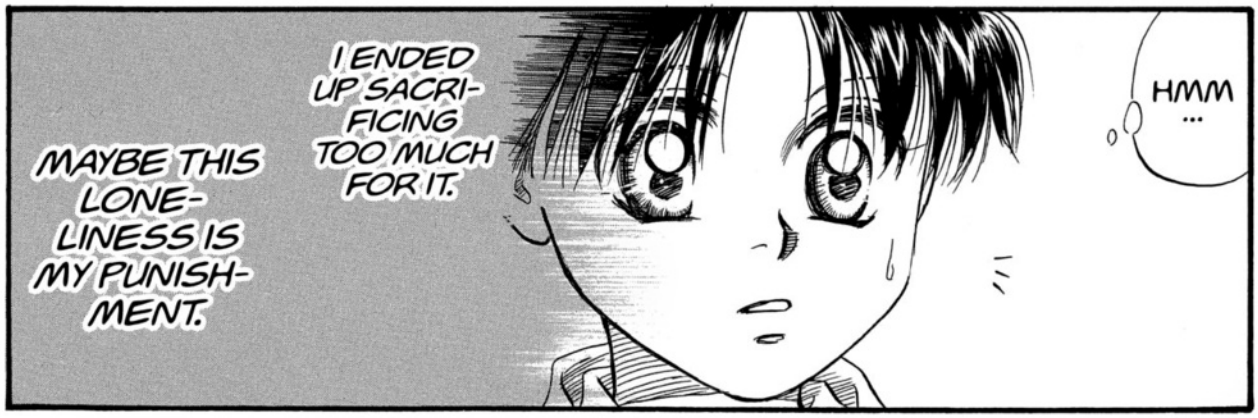
TAKUYA!
VEEN
WHAT?

I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!!
GON?
WAY TOO KIND-HEARTED!
PEOPLE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIM!
UGH...

WHEN WILL YOU BE BACK?
I DON'T KNOW. IF I WIN, I'LL BE GONE A LONG TIME.
LISTEN TO ME...
...I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHO THIS MOMOGAKI GUY IS.
LISTEN TO ME...
...KI...
I'M TAKUYA'S FRIEND TADASHI GOTOH.
OH! UM...WHO ARE YOU?
IS THAT SO?
HUH?
MO-MOGAKI!

OKAY, I GUESS THIS **DOES** SEEM STRANGE.
HA HA... I SEE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT HERE.
UP TO?
TAKUYA'S SO NAIVE THAT HE STILL HANGS A STOCKING ON CHRISTMAS.
WE DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT YOU!
NO I DON'T.
ARE YOU UPSET?
YOU'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TAKUYA'S GOOD NATURE. JUST WHAT'RE YOU UP TO, BUB?
YOU BET I AM!
HOB-BIES?
UM, WELL... GOT ANY HOBBIES?
TAKUYA
I USED TO LIVE HERE WITH MY GIRL-FRIEND.
NO, IT'S NOT THAT.
DID YOU GROW UP HERE OR SOME-THING?
I HAVE SPECIAL MEMO-RIES OF THIS PLACE.

I GUESSED IT.
OH...
SOB
SOB
SOB
ZANG
DID YOU BREAK UP OR SOME-THING?
WE WERE SO POOR BACK THEN.
THAT WAS THREE YEARS AGO. JUST FOR A YEAR.


MAYBE THIS LONE-LINESS IS MY PUNISH-MENT.
I ENDED UP SACRI-FICING TOO MUCH FOR IT.
HMM ...

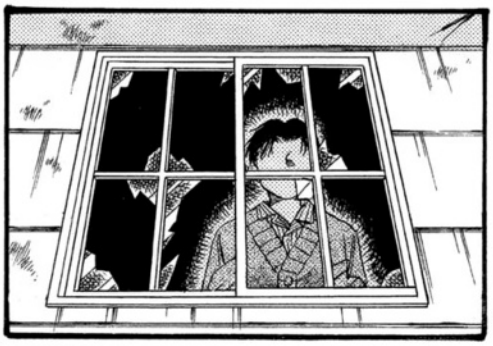
BUT I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUES-TION.
YOU GET RIGHT TO IT, HUH?
IT'S TOO HARD.

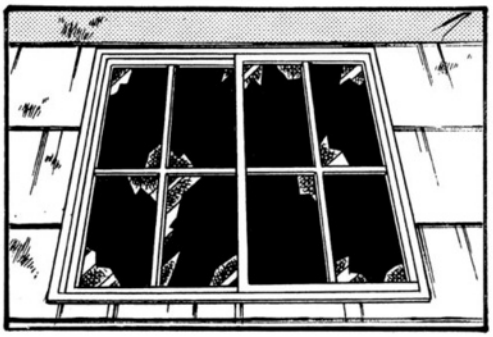
...
DO YOU LIKE IT ...
...OR DIS-LIKE IT?

HUH?
...DON'T YOU LIKE TENNIS ANY-MORE?
...
UM ...

HE WON THE ALL-JAPAN YOUTH TENNIS TOURNAMENT AND LATER BECOME A PROFESSIONAL TENNIS PLAYER.
THEN, IN SPITE OF HIS PARENTS' AND HIS COACH'S OBJECTIONS, HE MOVED IN WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND.
...BUT MOMOGAKI TOLD US LOTS OF OTHER THINGS.
HE WOULDN'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION ...
BUT HE COULDN'T RISE IN THE RANKINGS, AND HIS FRUSTRATION AFFECTED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND.
...UNTIL HE WAS ABLE TO PLAY IN TOURNAMENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD.
HE STARTED ENTERING SMALL COMPETITIONS AND WORKED HIS WAY UP...
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
I DON'T KNOW.
I'M NOT REALLY SURE.
BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE?
YOU'RE NOT GONNA SOLVE ANYTHING BY MOPING AROUND THIS DUMP.
HOW DO YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT WITHOUT A BED?
YEAH.
AND WHY'RE YOU WEARING PAJAMAS?
THERE'S NO BATHTUB.

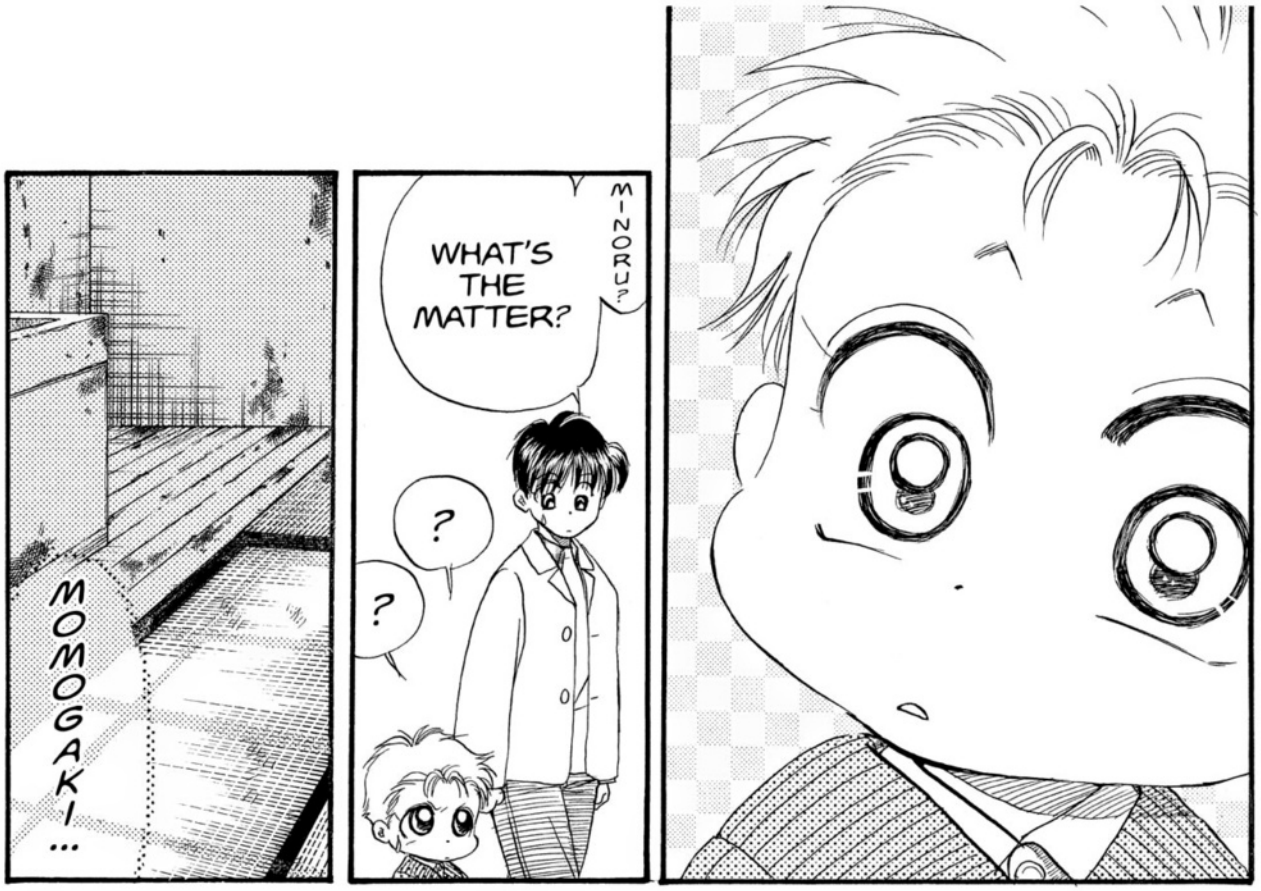
SO I JUST DON'T SLEEP.
WHEN I TRY, EVERY-THING GETS TOO DARK.
ANYWAY, I DON'T NEED TO SLEEP.
I DON'T SEEM TO NEED IT.
BUT I FEEL HUNGRY WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE PAST.
AFTER ALL THAT...

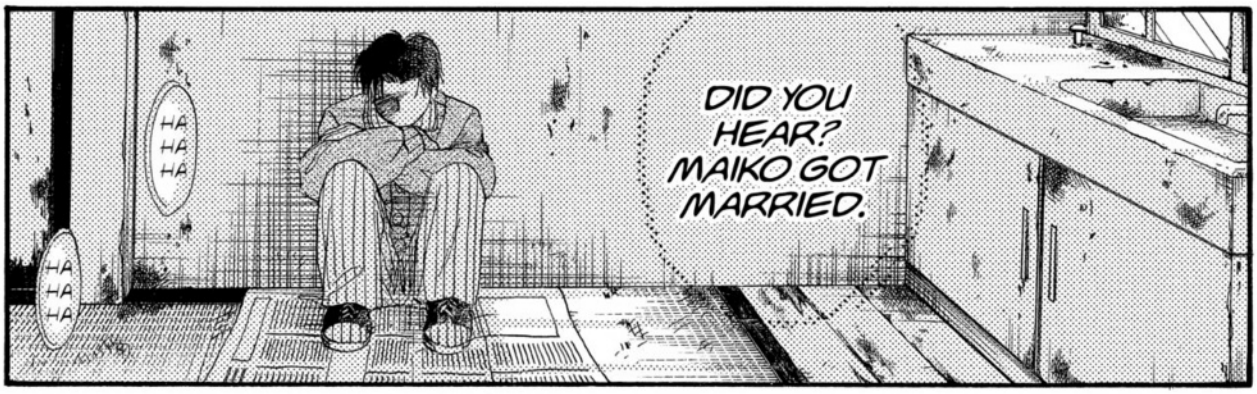




HUH?

I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS SUCH A NICE GUY.
...YOU AGREED TO BUY HIM LUNCH TOMORROW, GON?
HA HA HA





WHAT...

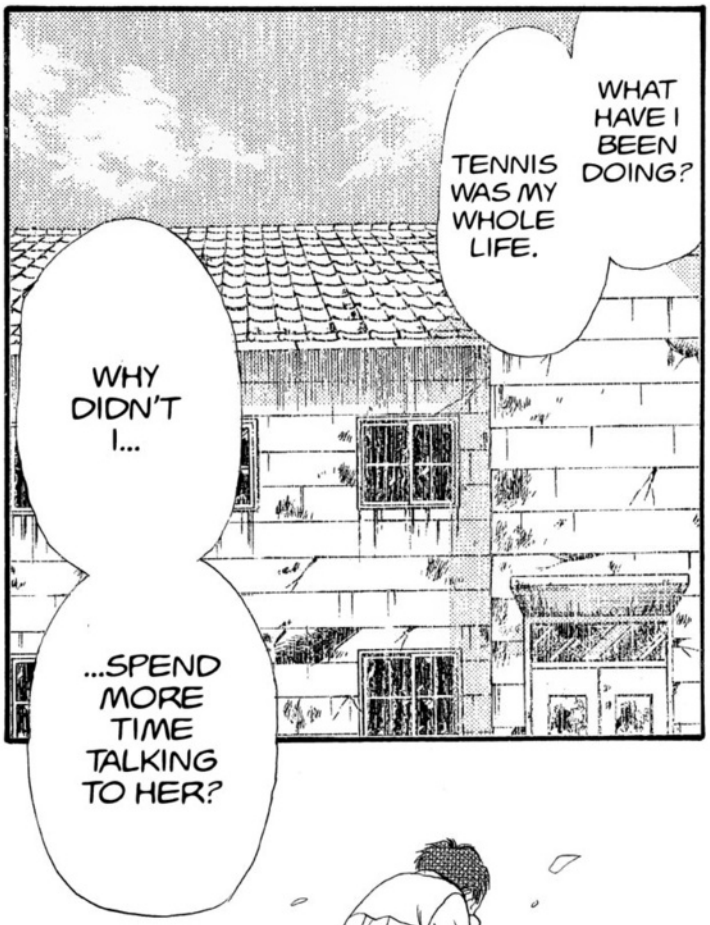
...AM I DOING HERE?

TENNIS RANKINGS?
ATP OR WTA?
IS IT HARD TO GO UP IN THE RANKINGS?
I'M SURE IT IS.
BUT YOU'D HAVE TO BE VERY GOOD...
...JUST TO QUALIFY TO PLAY AT THAT LEVEL.
VERY GOOD.
WH... WHAT?
THOSE ARE INTERNATIONAL TENNIS ORGANIZATIONS.
NOT MANY JAPANESE MAKE IT.
KIMIKO DATE WAS ONE OF THE TOP TEN WOMEN AND SHUZO MATSUOKA WAS IN THE TOP 50 FOR MEN.
IF A PLAYER LIKE THAT LOST FOCUS, IT'D BE REALLY BAD, HUH?
THESE ARE ODD QUESTIONS...
...BUT AT LEAST WE'RE TALKING.
?
HEAR THAT, MINORU? INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION IS TOUGH.
?
YEAH!

TENNIS? WHEN DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN TENNIS, TADASHI?
OH YEAH?
MOMOGAKI SAID HE WAS A PROFES-SIONAL, RIGHT?
I THOUGHT HIS NAME MIGHT BE IN IT.
AFTER WE TALKED TO THAT GUY, I WENT TO A BOOK-STORE...
...AND I GOT MY MOM TO BUY THIS FOR ME.
TA-DA! A TENNIS MAGAZINE!
THE TOP TENNIS
4
PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS IN JAPAN
DO YOU THINK HE'D MIND SHOWING ME HOW HE SWINGS HIS RACKET?
...
MARTINA HINGIS IS A BABE.
HEE HEE
HINGIS?
BUT I DID LEARN ONE THING.
NO. THIS MAGAZINE ONLY HAS THE MOST FAMOUS PLAYERS.
SO WAS IT?
WHAT'S THAT?
WE WERE NICE ENOUGH TO PICK UP LUNCH FOR HIM, RIGHT?
IT'S PROB-ABLY OKAY.
WOULD IT BE RUDE OF ME TO ASK?
...
MINORU AND HIRO ARE DOWN HERE

B-BUT...
...I'M NOT THAT GREAT.
YEAH. WE'VE NEVER MET A PROFESSIONAL TENNIS PLAYER...
...LIKE YOU BEFORE.
YOU WANT TO SEE MY SWING?
HUH?
AAAH
AH
A RACKET...
HUH?
DID I BRING IT HERE?
WHY DON'T WE GO OUTSIDE?
OUTSIDE?
WHUP
AAAAH
OKAY, I'LL SHOW YOU A COUPLE OF THINGS.
WHAT'S WITH HIM?

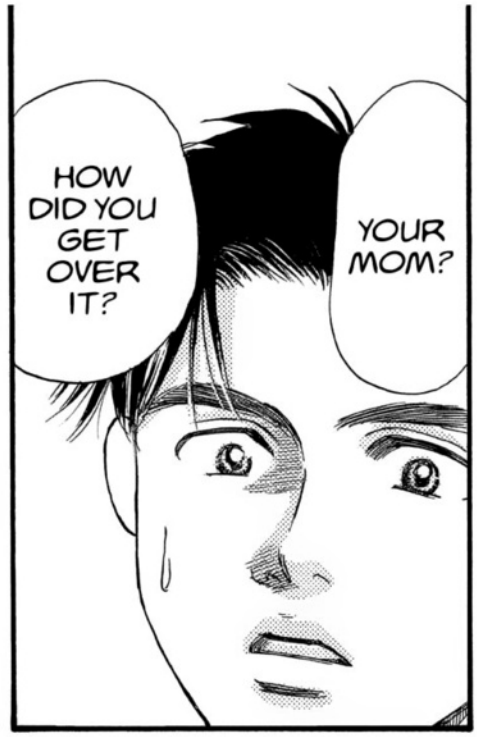
MOMOGAKI...
I'M SORRY, BUT...MAIKO'S DEAD.
SHE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER THREE YEARS AGO.
THAT STORY ABOUT HER GETTING MARRIED AND MOVING TO HOKKAIDO WASN'T TRUE.
SHING
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? HOW DID I GET HERE?
I CAN'T REMEMBER.
WHAT?
I...
I LOST THE WOMAN I LOVED.
WHAT?
IT'S TRUE.

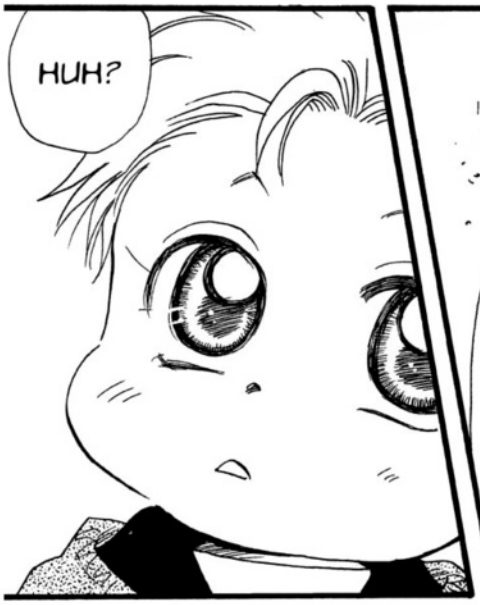


...THE WAY SHE SUPPORTED ME.

I SHOULD'VE SUPPORTED HER...

I'LL NEVER GET OVER IT.
I DIDN'T.


YOUR MOM?
HOW DID YOU GET OVER IT?


HUH?

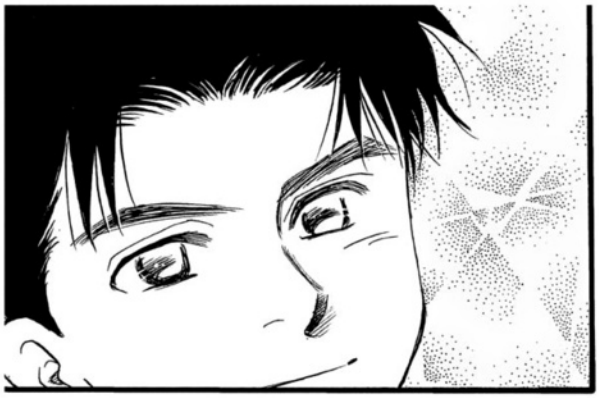
BUT I...
...STILL HAD MY DAD AND MINORU...
...AND I HAD TO BE STRONG FOR THEM.

...

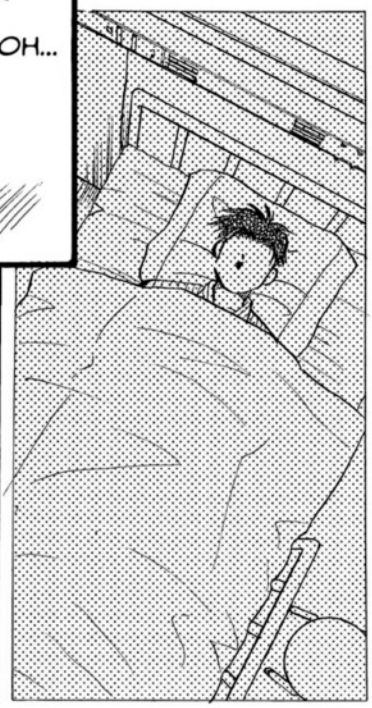
WHAT...

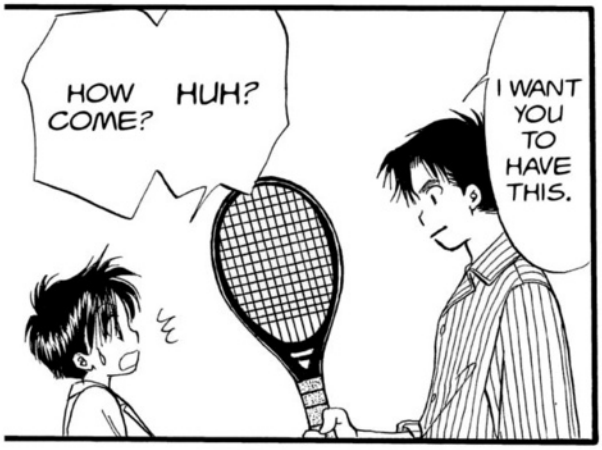
...DO I HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR?
YOU'RE QUITE A BOY.
HA HA...

THE SERVE.
THE FOREHAND.
THE BACKHAND.
I'M VERY IMPRESSED.
YELLING AT THE REF.
HA HA HA HA



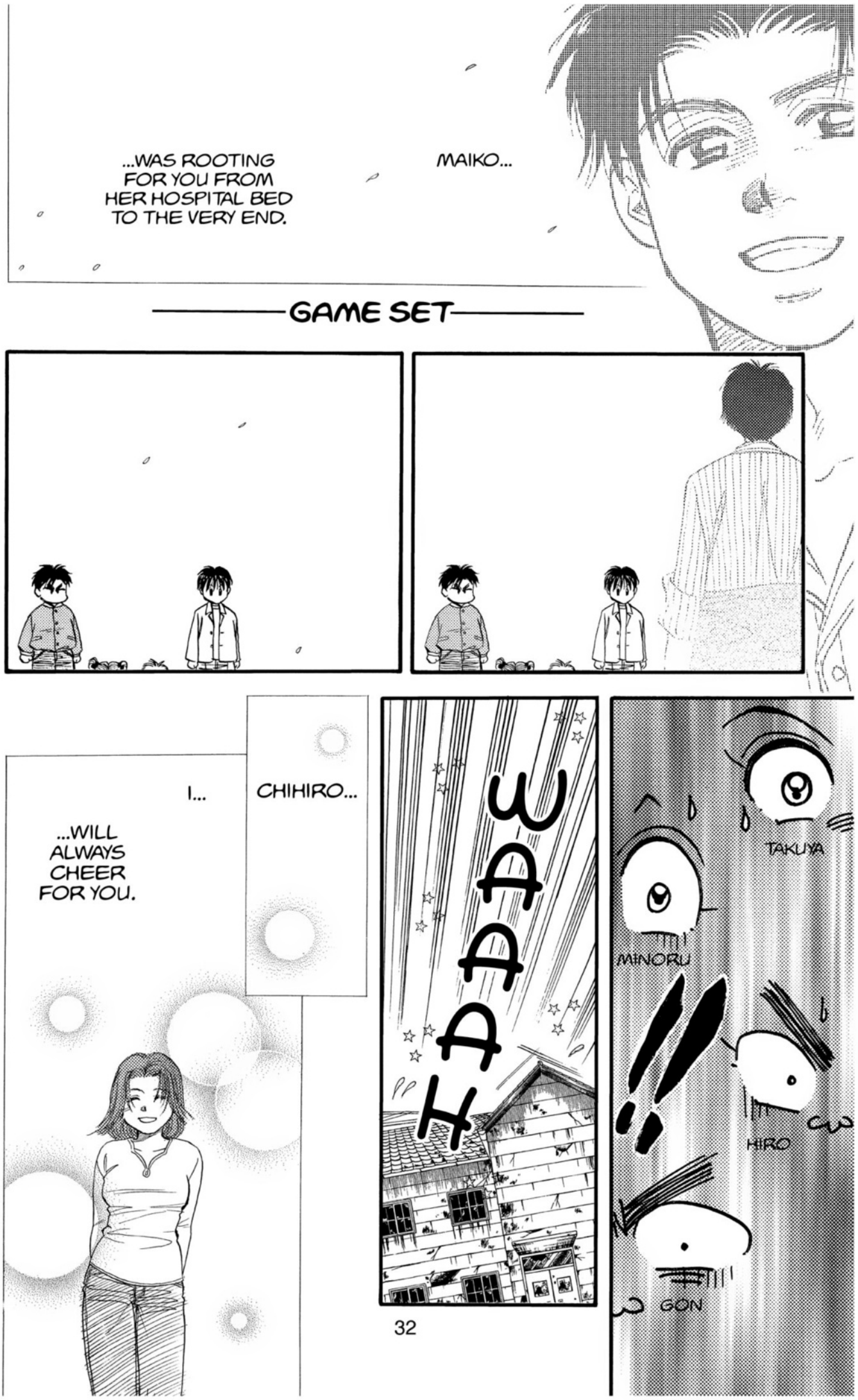
OH...
TAKUYA ...
YEAH?




HOW COME?
HUH?
I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS.

I'VE REMEM-BERED...
MAN, TALK ABOUT UNFAIR.
POP
AND HERE'S A BALL EACH FOR YOU THREE.

...SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
THIS ISN'T...
...WHERE I BELONG.

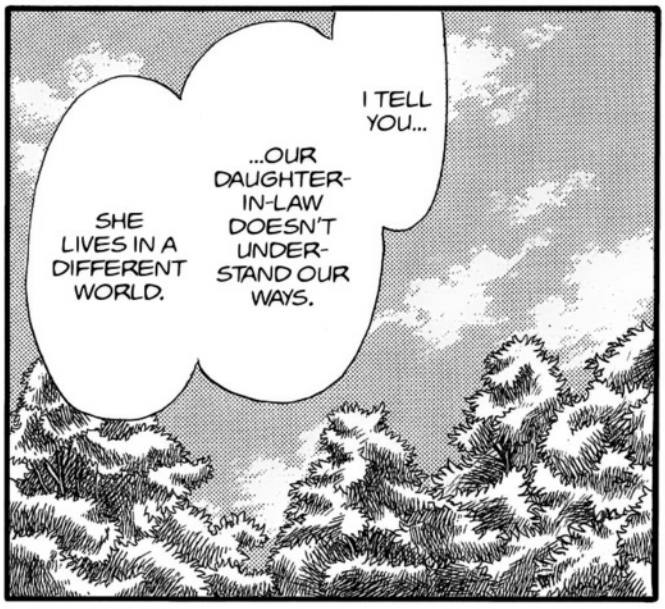

...WAS ROOTING FOR YOU FROM HER HOSPITAL BED TO THE VERY END.
MAIKO...
GAME SET
CHIHIRO...
I...
...WILL ALWAYS CHEER FOR YOU.
WAAAAH
TAKUYA
MINORU
HIRO
GON

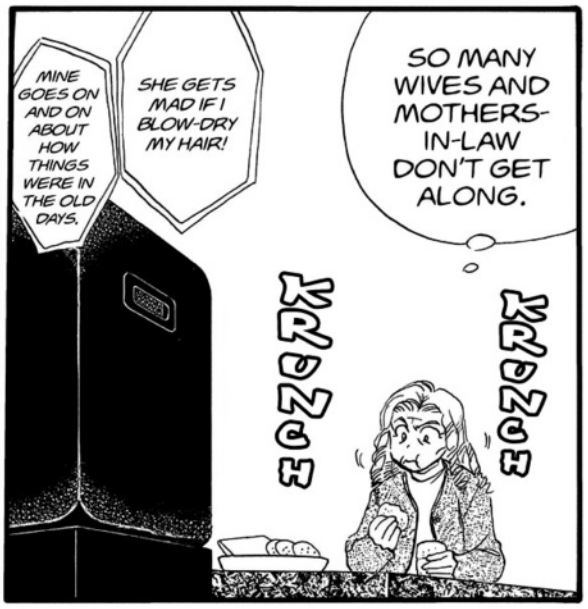
WHAK
WHAK
TMP
...
AND YOU SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GAIN WEIGHT WITHOUT SO MUCH AS AN IV.
WHAT?
IT WAS SO STRANGE. DID YOU DREAM ABOUT EATING?
BUT YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS, SO THE DOCTORS COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW IT HAPPENED.
YOU HAD ALCOHOL POISONING.
MOM...
YOU'RE AWAKE!
OH!
YOUR COACH AND SOME OF THE PLAYERS WERE JUST HERE.
...IS MISSING.
I WONDER WHERE IT WENT.
THE TENNIS RACKET...
...THAT WAS IN YOUR ROOM...
AND THAT'S NOT ALL.

Chapter 98 / The End

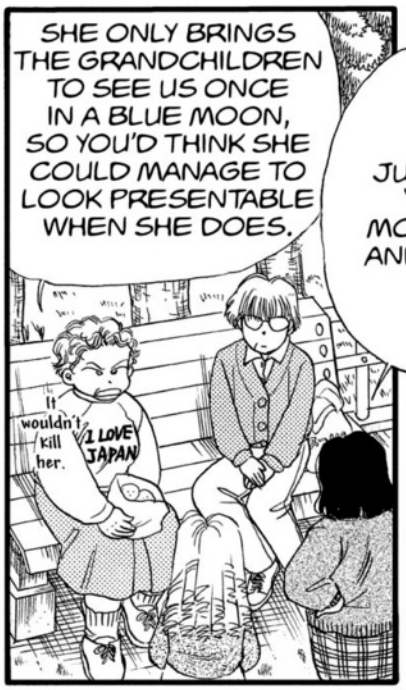
POULTICE
HEH HEH HEH ...
BABY & Me
Chapter 99
TOMOKO'S FINE. CUT IT OUT, OLD LADY.
UGH ...

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW FAKES A COUGHING FIT EVERY TIME SHE EATS MY COOKING! I'M SICK OF IT!
KRUNCH
SHE'S STILL LIVING IN THE MEIJI ERA!
THAT MOTHER-IN-LAW OF MINE IS PURE EVIL!
SHE'S SUCH A NAG.
SENICHI KIMURA
MINE TOO!
THE CONFRONTATION HAND IS MORE EVIL? WIFE OR MOTHER-IN-LAW?

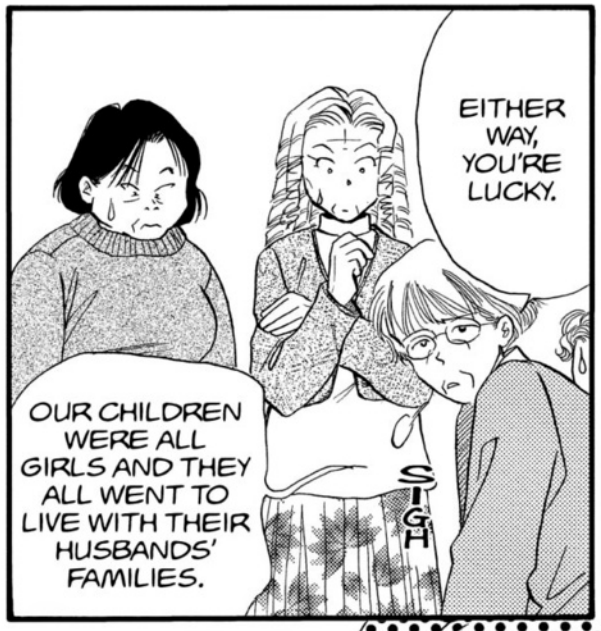

I TELL YOU...
...OUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW DOESN'T UNDER-STAND OUR WAYS.
SHE LIVES IN A DIFFERENT WORLD.

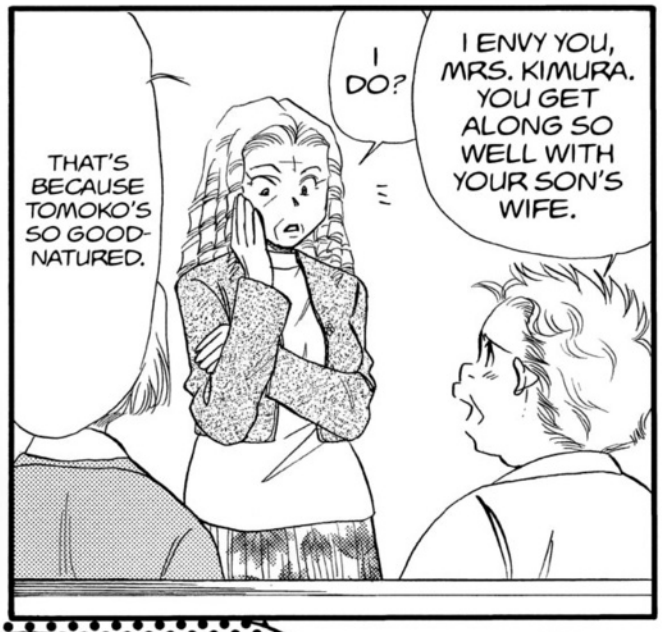

MINE GOES ON AND ON ABOUT HOW THINGS WERE IN THE OLD DAYS.
SHE GETS MAD IF I BLOW-DRY MY HAIR!
SO MANY WIVES AND MOTHERS-IN-LAW DON'T GET ALONG.
KRUNCH
KRUNCH

AND YOU KNOW ...
THEY'RE ALL HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THEIR DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.


SHE ONLY BRINGS THE GRANDCHILDREN TO SEE US ONCE IN A BLUE MOON, SO YOU'D THINK SHE COULD MANAGE TO LOOK PRESENTABLE WHEN SHE DOES.
It wouldn't kill her.
I LOVE JAPAN

...I'D JUST SAY, "YES, MOTHER," AND OBEY.
WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BRIDE...
SHE SULKS IF I TRY TO GIVE HER ADVICE.


EITHER WAY, YOU'RE LUCKY.
OUR CHILDREN WERE ALL GIRLS AND THEY ALL WENT TO LIVE WITH THEIR HUSBANDS' FAMILIES.
SIGH


I ENVY YOU, MRS. KIMURA. YOU GET ALONG SO WELL WITH YOUR SON'S WIFE.
I DO?
THAT'S BECAUSE TOMOKO'S SO GOOD-NATURED.

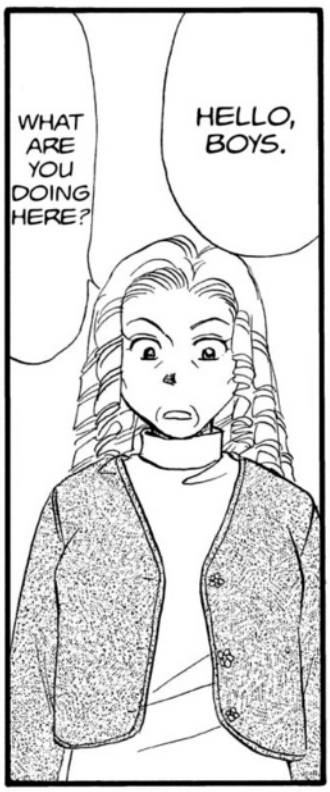
THANK YOU, TAKUYA.
I WOULD'VE ASKED MY MOTHER-IN-LAW FOR HELP, BUT SHE'S GONE OUT.

SEE YOU!
SEE YOU!
I REALLY APPRECIATE IT. I'LL BRING YOU BACK A TREAT.
TMP
TMP

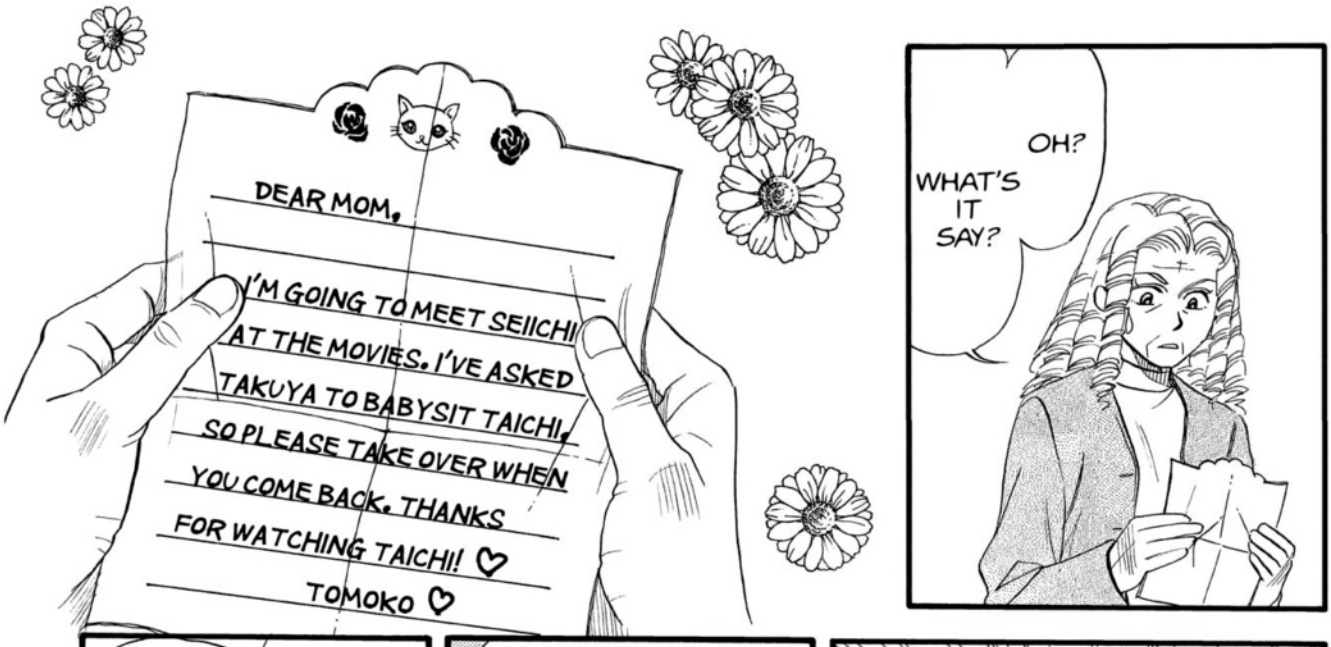
NO PROBLEM.
I CAN WATCH TAICHI...
...UNTIL MRS. KIMURA COMES BACK.
MINORU

ONE DAY TOMOKO ASKED ME TO BABYSIT TAICHI.
SHE'S GOING TO THE MOVIES. THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN.
ADA.

TOMOKO ASKED ME TO GIVE THIS TO YOU.
HI, MRS. KIMURA.
A NOTE?


WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HELLO, BOYS.

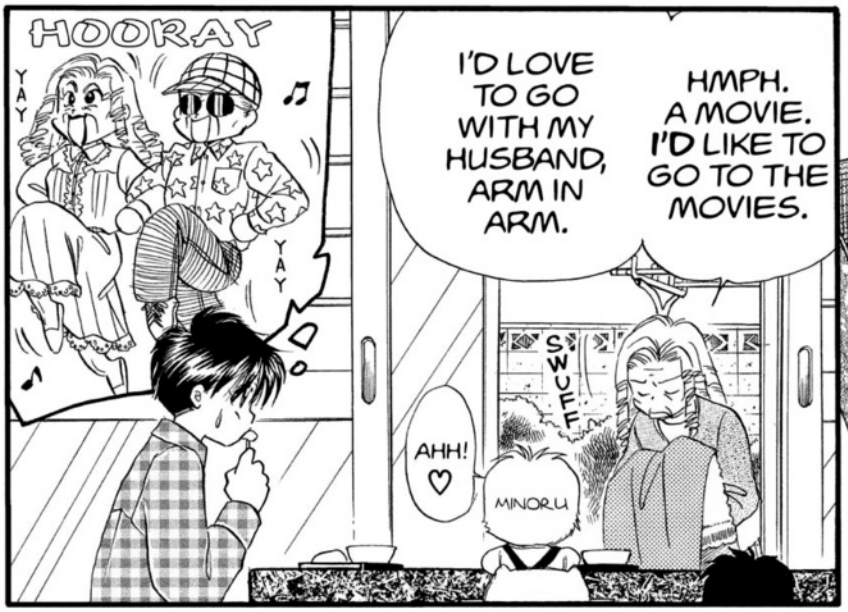
I NEVER THOUGHT ...
...THIS WOULD CAUSE A RIFT IN THE KIMURA HOUSEHOLD.
OH!

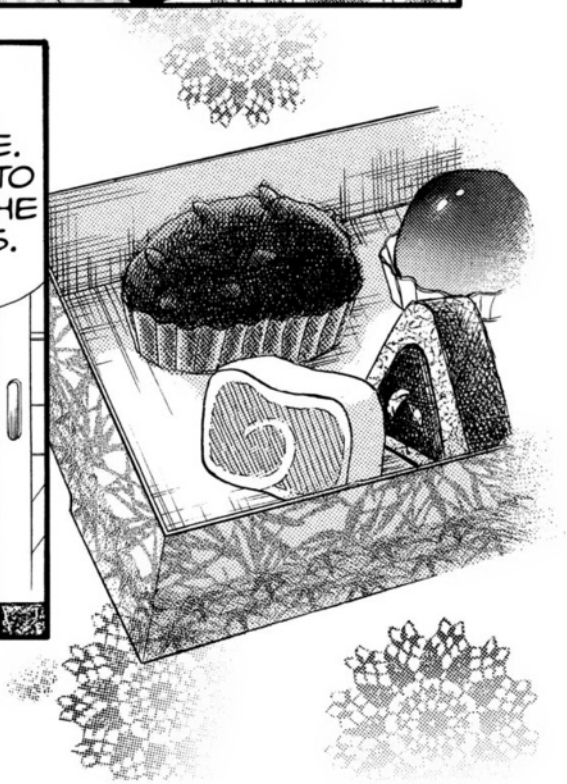

DEAR MOM,
I'M GOING TO MEET SEIICHI AT THE MOVIES. I'VE ASKED TAKUYA TO BABYSIT TAICHI, SO PLEASE TAKE OVER WHEN YOU COME BACK. THANKS FOR WATCHING TAICHI! ♡
TOMOKO ♡
OH?
WHAT'S IT SAY?

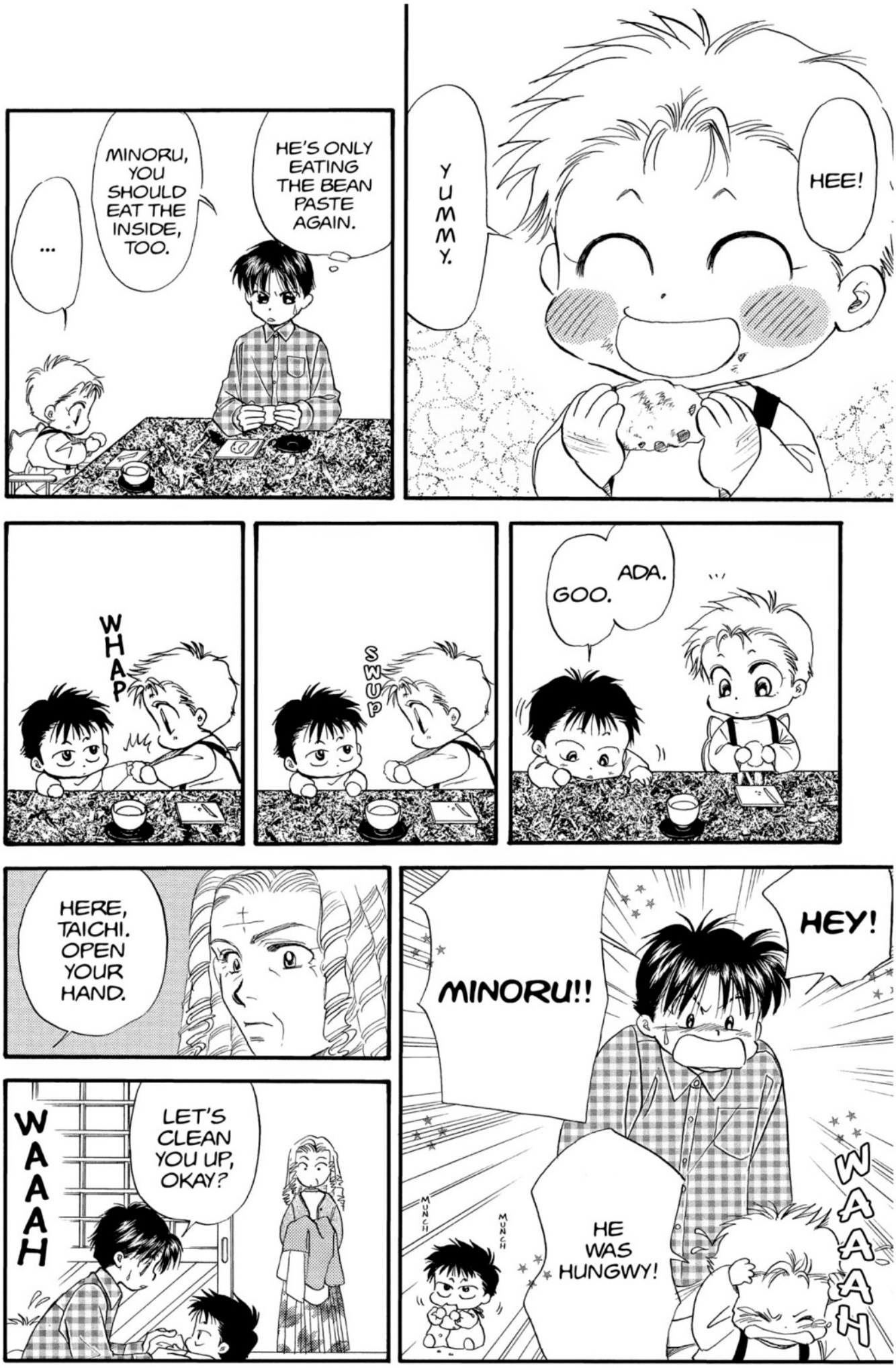
COME HERE, TAICHI.
TAKUYA, PLEASE STAY AND HAVE A TREAT, OKAY?
OKAY.
ABA
ABA

I'M SORRY. SHE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS EARLIER. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, TAKUYA.
THROB THROB

BA-BOOM
MRS. KIMURA?
She's furious


HOORAY
YAY
YAY
I'D LOVE TO GO WITH MY HUSBAND, ARM IN ARM.
HMPH. A MOVIE. I'D LIKE TO GO TO THE MOVIES.
SWUFF
AHH! ♡
MINORU

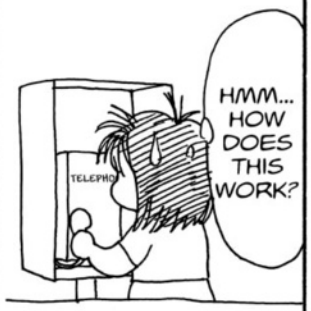



...
MINORU, YOU SHOULD EAT THE INSIDE, TOO.
HE'S ONLY EATING THE BEAN PASTE AGAIN.
YUMMY.
HEE!
WHAP
SWUP
GOO.
ADA.
HERE, TAICHI. OPEN YOUR HAND.
WAAAH
LET'S CLEAN YOU UP, OKAY?
MINORU!!
HEY!
MUNCH
MUNCH
HE WAS HUNGWY!
WAAAH

Author's Note Part 2

The Tale of a Dream

When I was staying in New York, I had a dream in which I was having a hard time using a pay phone.

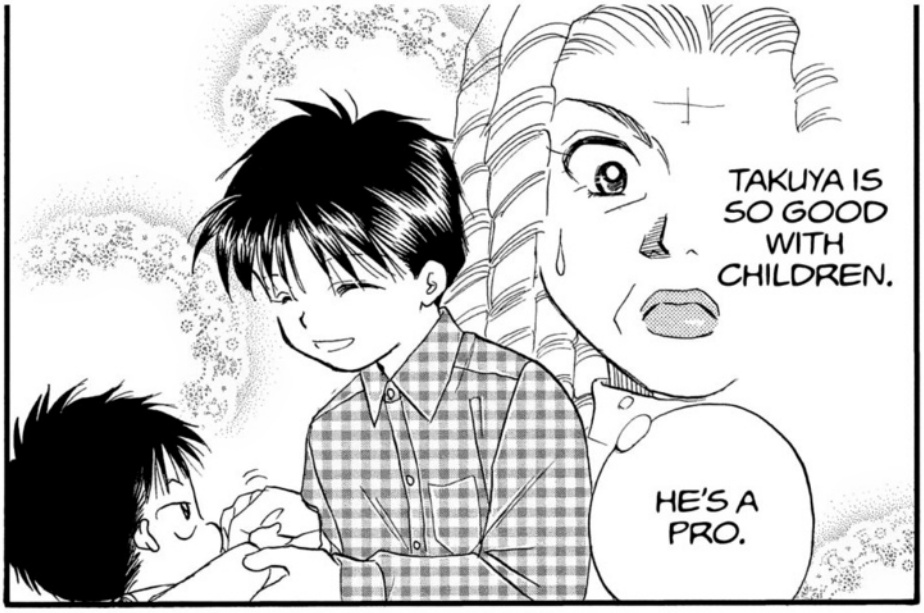


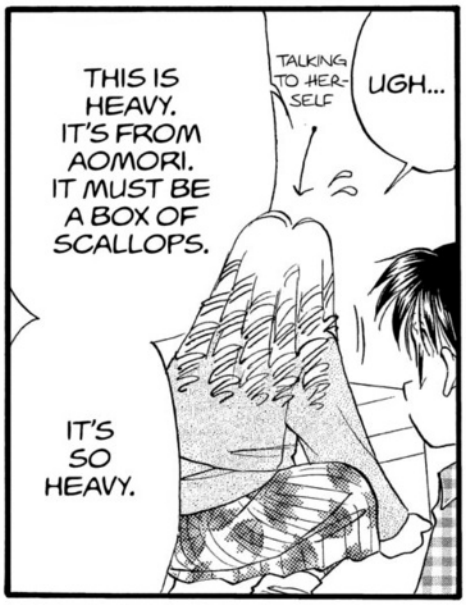
Suddenly a teenage girl walked up swinging her hips.

I asked her to let me use her cell phone, but the girl said...

I asked her why and the girl said this as she walked away...

Continued in Part 3

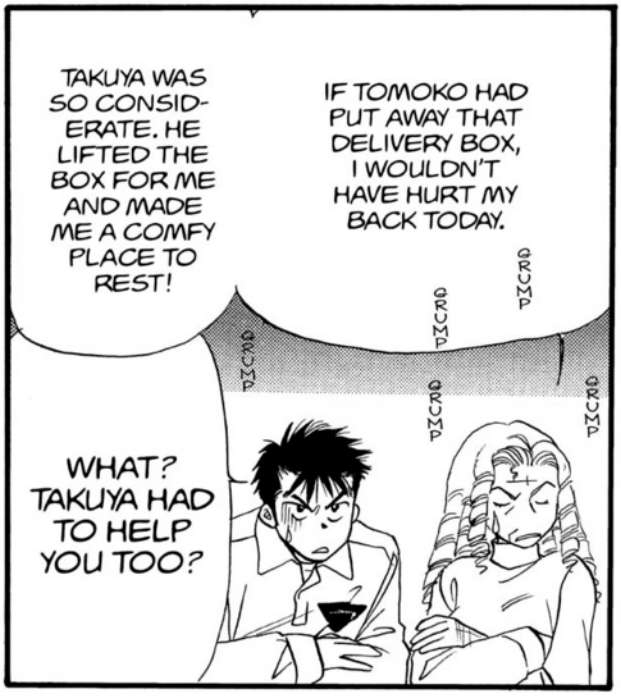


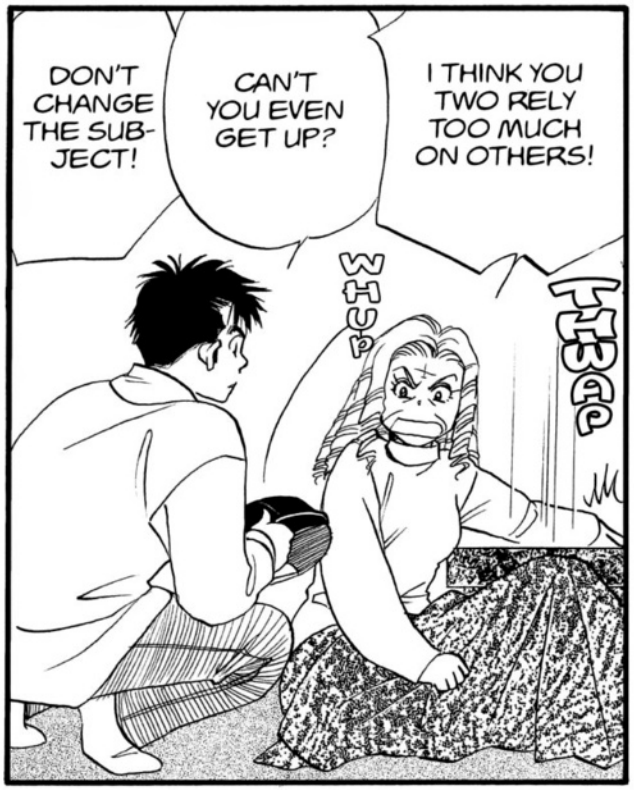


ZING ZING
HUH?
I THINK I'VE...
...HURT MY BACK.
WHAT?
DID YOU SLIPA DISK?
YES...
T... TAKUYA...
WHY ARE YOU LYING DOWN, MOM?
HUH?

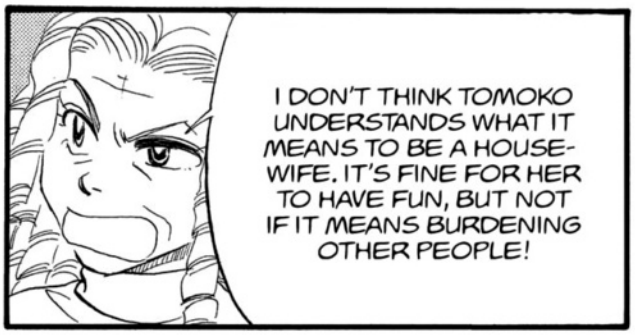
...FOR WATCHING TAICHI.
YEAH, BUT SHE TOOK A THANK YOU GIFT OVER TO TAKUYA...
TOMOKO...

HA HA HA! YOU'RE GETTING OLD, HUH?
WHERE'S TOMOKO? DIDN'T SHE COME BACK WITH YOU?
MY BACK HURTS. BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S A SLIPPED DISK.
VEEN

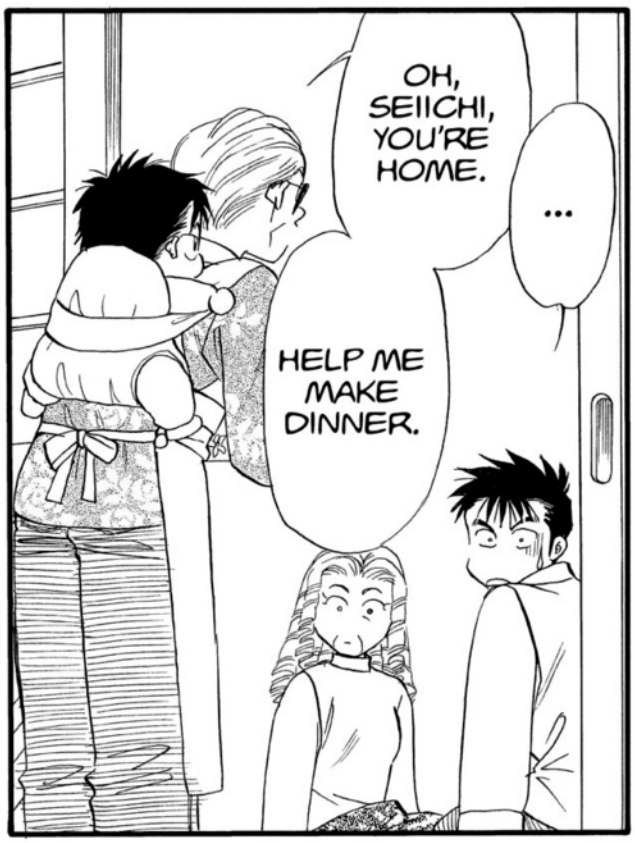

TAKUYA WAS SO CONSIDERATE. HE LIFTED THE BOX FOR ME AND MADE ME A COMFY PLACE TO REST!
IF TOMOKO HAD PUT AWAY THAT DELIVERY BOX, I WOULDN'T HAVE HURT MY BACK TODAY.
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
WHAT? TAKUYA HAD TO HELP YOU TOO?

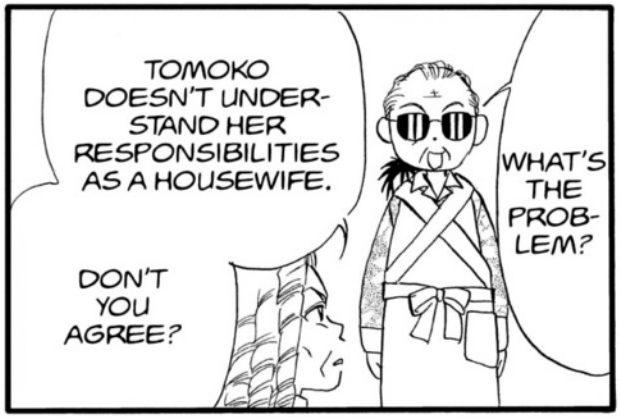

DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT!
CAN'T YOU EVEN GET UP?
I THINK YOU TWO RELY TOO MUCH ON OTHERS!
WHUP
THWAP

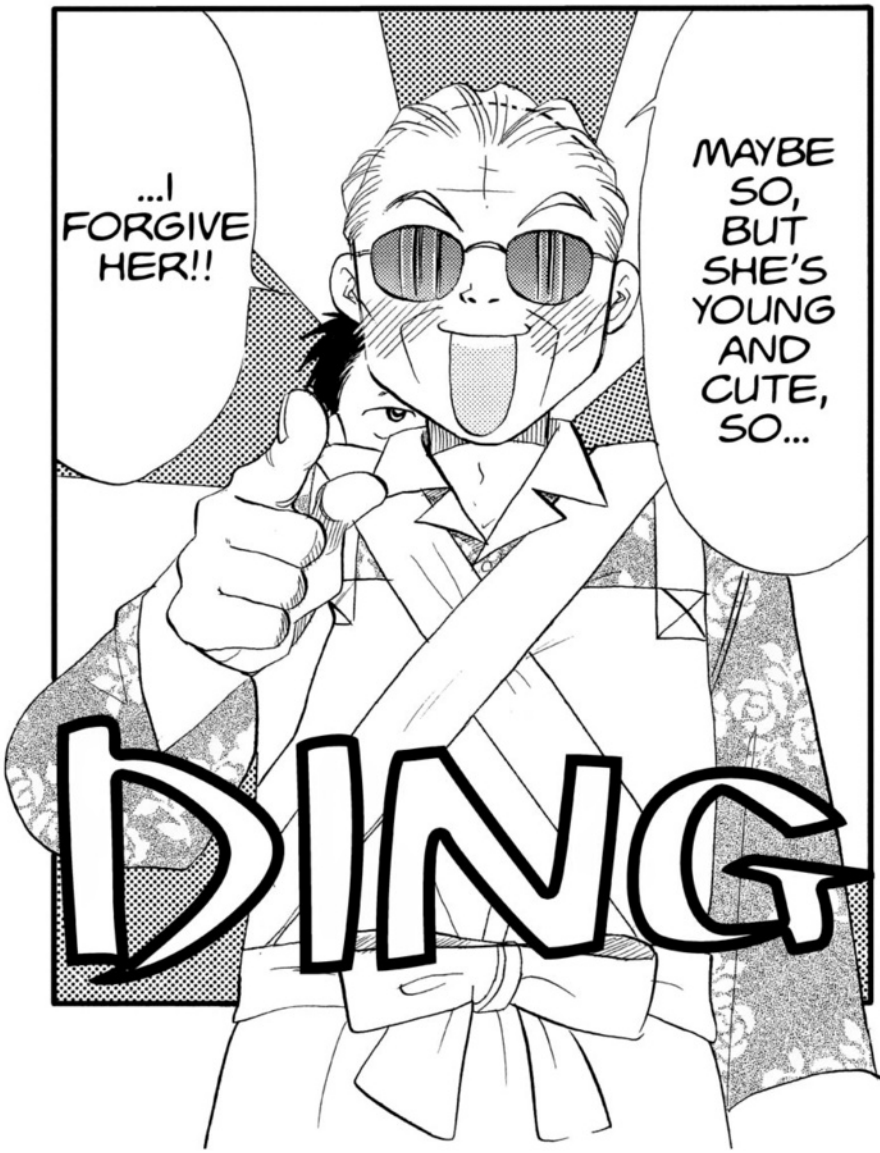
DINNER'S READY! ♡
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!
HERE YOU ARE!


I DON'T THINK TOMOKO UNDERSTANDS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HOUSEWIFE. IT'S FINE FOR HER TO HAVE FUN, BUT NOT IF IT MEANS BURDENING OTHER PEOPLE!

I'M IN PAIN!
YOU'RE DUMPING YOUR DUTIES ON OTHERS TOO!
HMPH


OH, SEIICHI, YOU'RE HOME.
...
HELP ME MAKE DINNER.


TOMOKO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND HER RESPONSIBILITIES AS A HOUSEWIFE.
DON'T YOU AGREE?
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?


...I FORGIVE HER!!
MAYBE SO, BUT SHE'S YOUNG AND CUTE, SO...
DING

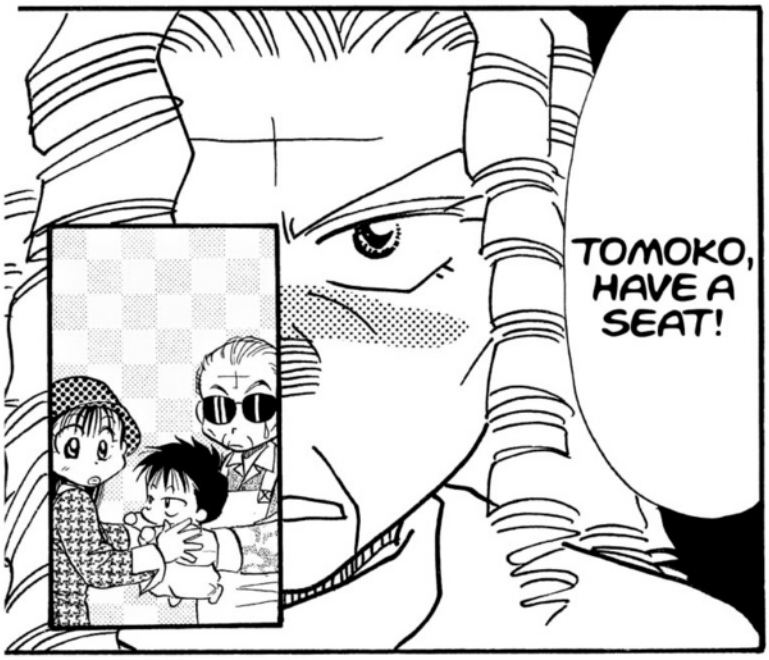
THAT'S RIGHT. SHE RELIES TOO MUCH ON OTHERS, DON'T YOU THINK?
BACK ME UP!
WHO? ME?

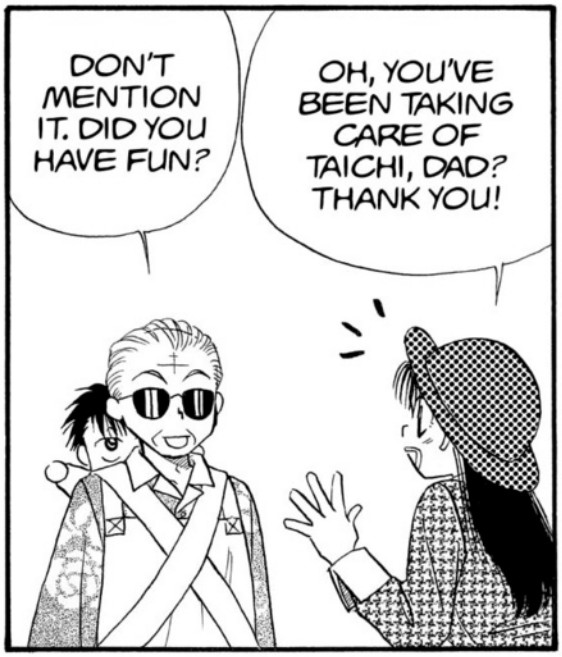
ADA.
UM...

HMM...

HEH HEH HEH... TOMOKO'S BACK! ♡
KREEK
I'M HOME!
OH, SHE'S BACK.

HOW'S YOUR BACK NOW?
OOF!!
THWAK


TOMOKO, HAVE A SEAT!

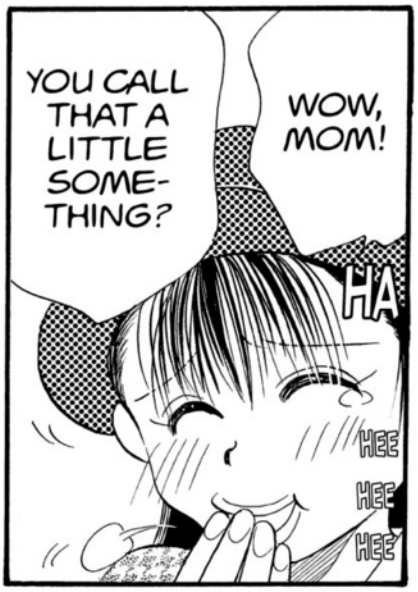

DON'T MENTION IT. DID YOU HAVE FUN?
OH, YOU'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF TAICHI, DAD? THANK YOU!

THERE'S A LITTLE SOME-THING I WANT TO SAY TO YOU.
LISTEN, TOMOKO.
WUMP
YES?
THEY SAT DOWN TOO FOR SOME REASON

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN LIVES TO LEAD.
IT'S NOT FAIR TO DUMP YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ONTO OTHERS.

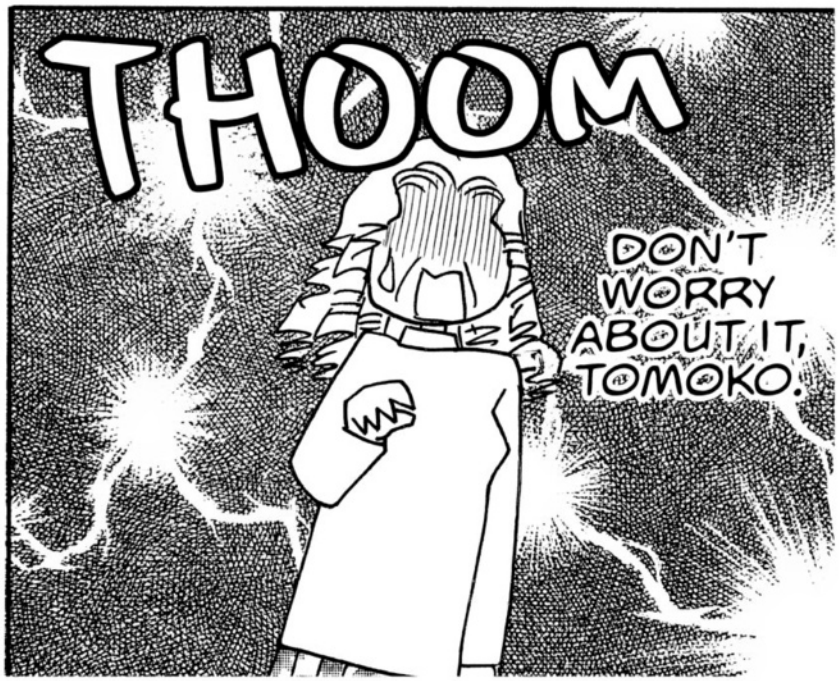
IF YOU'D TOLD US BEFOREHAND, IT WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT...
YOU'RE A HOUSEWIFE AND A MOTHER.
...BUT YOU SHOULDN'T JUST RUN OFF LIKE THAT.

SHE ISN'T EVEN LISTENING!!

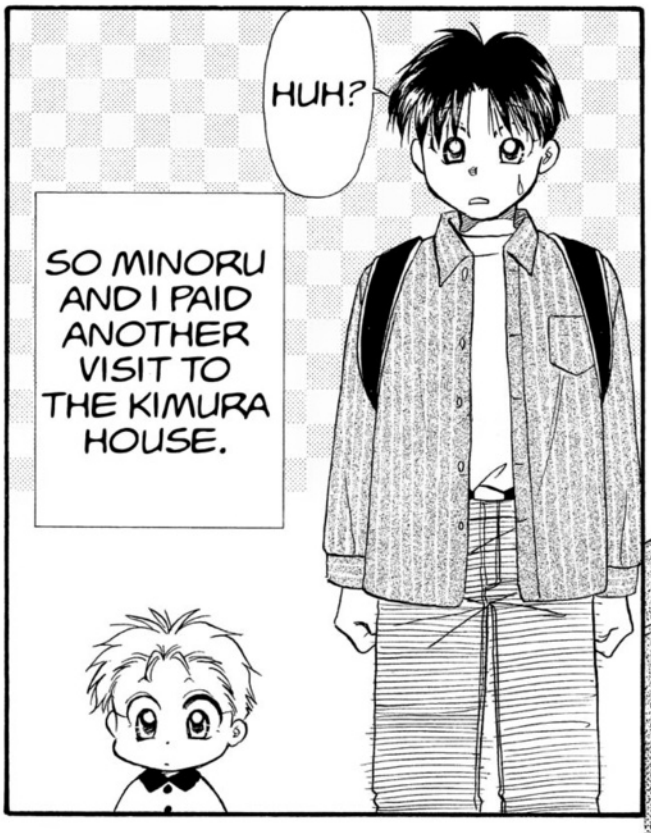

YOU CALL THAT A LITTLE SOMETHING?
WOW, MOM!
HA
HEE
HEE
HEE

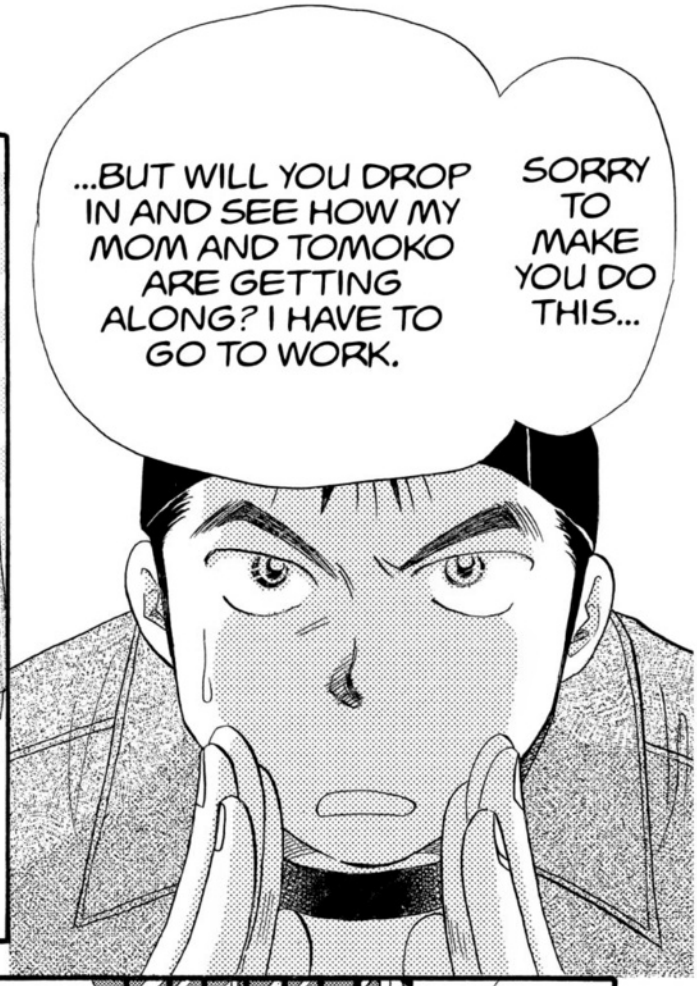
NOW, NOW. DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD.
BRR
BRR

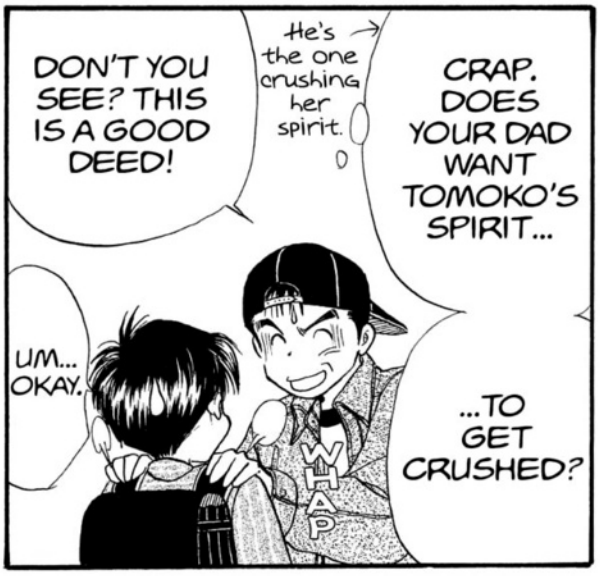
HUH? WHAT?
MOM JUST CHEWED YOU OUT BECAUSE SHE CARES ABOUT YOU.
WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE HONESTLY, RIGHT?
ADA.


THOOM
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, TOMOKO.

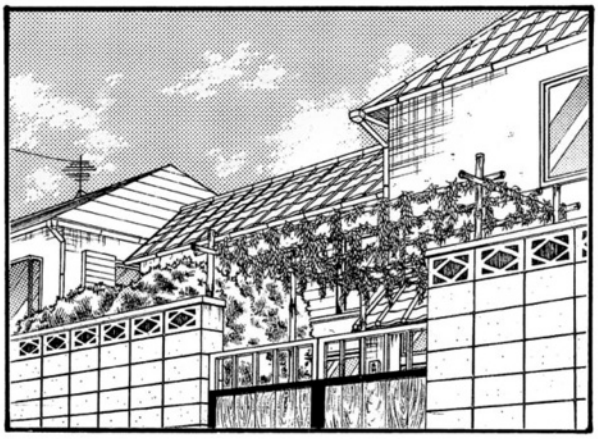
SO THAT'S WHAT SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT.
HUH?
BONG
SHE WAS MAD?
WHAT?
...
HA HA HA HA HA HA
WATCH HOW I'LL DO IT, SEIICHI!
ALL RIGHT! I'LL RE-STORE MY REPU-TATION!
WHUP
I DIDN'T REALIZE TOMOKO WAS SO CLUELESS.
SHE'S TOUGH.
I'LL PROVE TO MOM THAT I'M A GOOD DAUGHTER-IN-LAW IN ONE DAY... TOMORROW!!
THIS COULD GET UGLY.
ONE, TWO, THREE! HOORAY!
SO...


HUH?
SO MINORU AND I PAID ANOTHER VISIT TO THE KIMURA HOUSE.


...BUT WILL YOU DROP IN AND SEE HOW MY MOM AND TOMOKO ARE GETTING ALONG? I HAVE TO GO TO WORK.
SORRY TO MAKE YOU DO THIS...


DON'T YOU SEE? THIS IS A GOOD DEED!
He's the one crushing her spirit.
CRAP. DOES YOUR DAD WANT TOMOKO'S SPIRIT...
UM... OKAY.
WHAP
...TO GET CRUSHED?

WHAT'S THAT?
BUT I...
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO, DO YOU?
HUH?
NO, BUT...

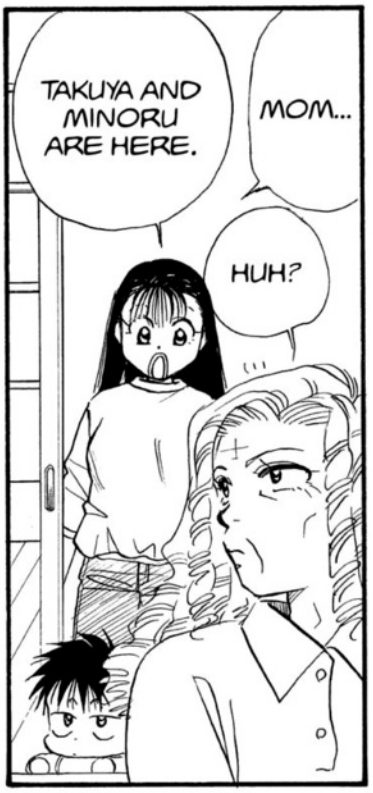


...DAD TOLD ME NOT TO DO ANY MORE FAVORS FOR YOU, SEIICHI.

OH, I CAN FOLD THE LAUNDRY.
MOM, YOU HAVE TO REST UNTIL YOUR BACK GETS BETTER!
I'M SERIOUS!
NO! NOT TODAY! YOU TAKE THE DAY OFF!
TUG
UNTIL NOW, I NEVER REALLY SAW HOW SHE DOES THE THINGS I ASK HER TO DO.
BUT I'LL FRET IF I JUST SIT AROUND ALL DAY.
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO USE THIS ATTACHMENT TO CLEAN THE CORNERS! IT DRIVES ME CRAZY!
This area wasn't cleaned.
VWOOO
SHE DIDN'T VACUUM THE CORNERS!
BUT TODAY I SAW THE TRUTH!
HELLO.
KLAK
THEY WERE RAISED IN A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT.
THAT'S RIGHT. THEY'RE OUTSIDERS. IT'S SO SAD...
AFTER ALL, THEY'RE OUTSIDERS.
WE CAN'T EXPECT OUR DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW TO DO THINGS EXACTLY THE WAY WE DO THEM.

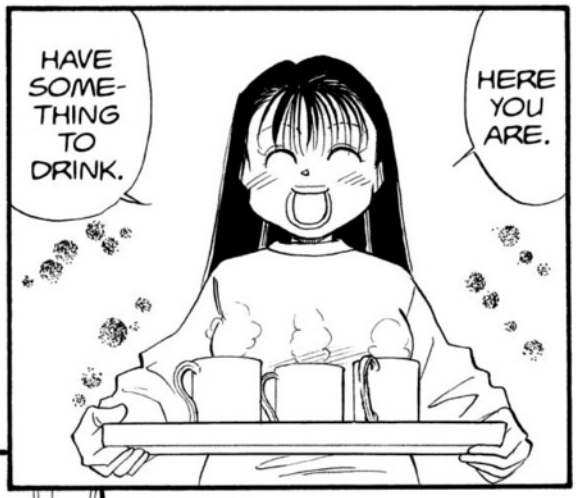
DID YOU COME HERE TO SEE HOW I WAS DOING?
OH, IT'S FINE.
ER, YES.
AND I THOUGHT WE COULD PLAY WITH TAICHI TOO.

HOW'S YOUR BACK, MRS. KIMURA?
HEWO.
BOW

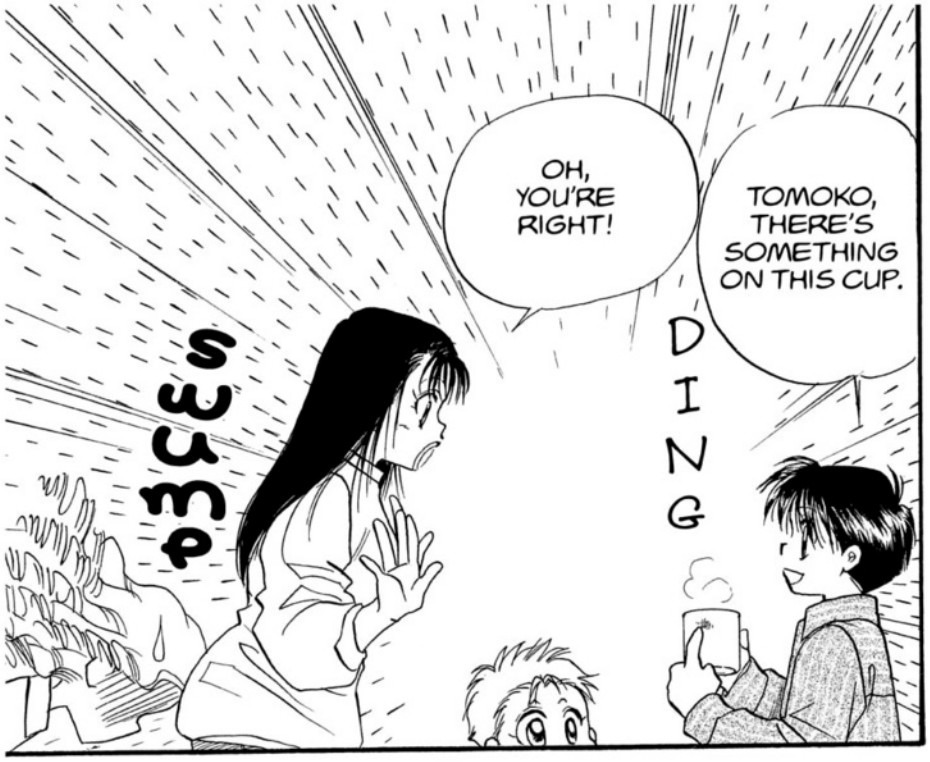

TAKUYA AND MINORU ARE HERE.
MOM...
HUH?

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I WANT TO WARN THEM... BUT WILL IT HURT TOMOKO'S FEELINGS?
WILL SHE THINK I'M A NAGGING MOTHER-IN-LAW?

T-TAKUYA'S CUP HAS FOOD ON IT!
Right here


HAVE SOME-THING TO DRINK.
HERE YOU ARE.

OH
IT'S MILK TEA.
HERE.


OH, YOU'RE RIGHT!
TOMOKO, THERE'S SOMETHING ON THIS CUP.
DING
SWUMP

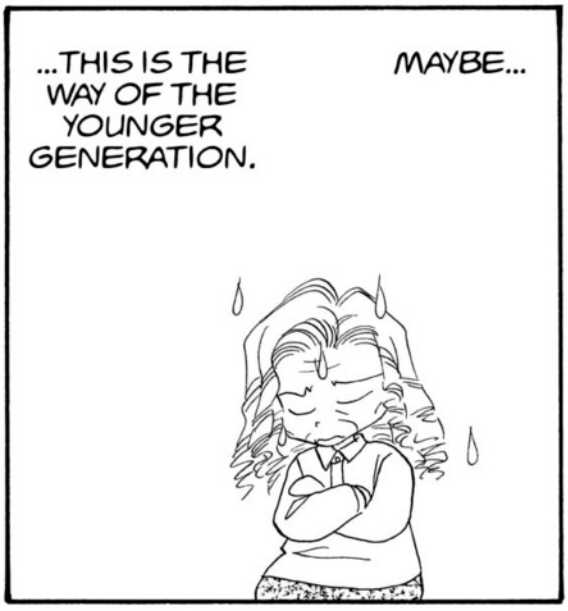
HUH?

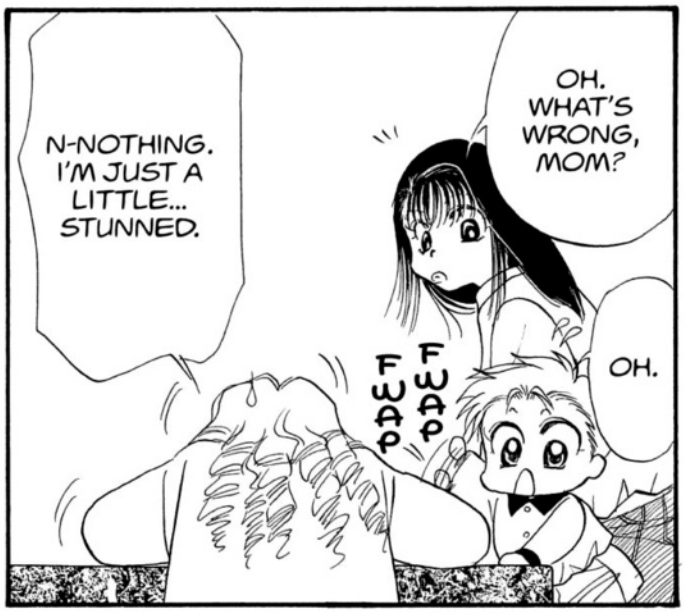
THOOM
NO SHAME!!

THAT'S OKAY.
HEH HEH... SORRY ABOUT THAT.
SKWIK
SKWIK

TAKE A WET NAP.
HERE.

WELL? HOW WILL SHE HANDLE IT?


...THIS IS THE WAY OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION.
MAYBE...

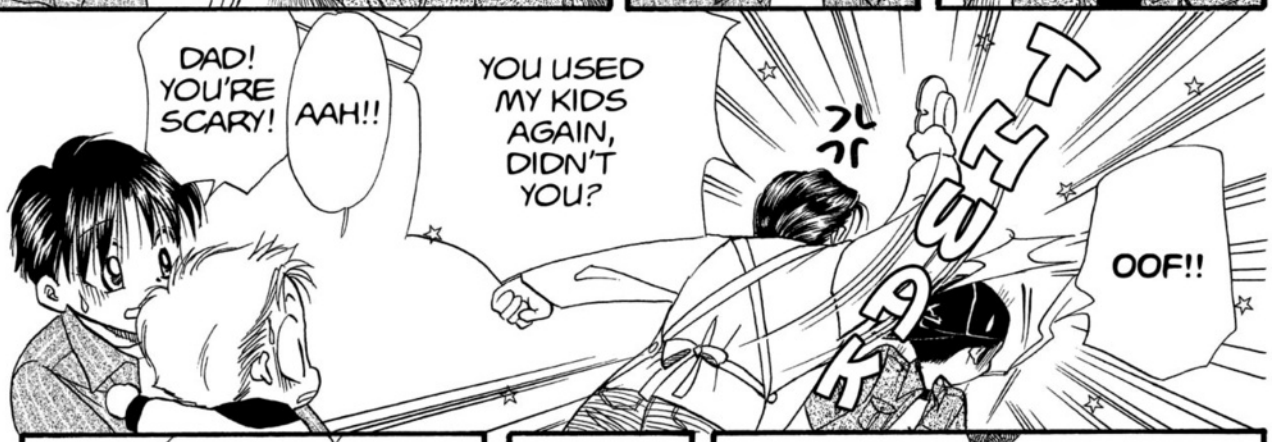

N-NOTHING. I'M JUST A LITTLE... STUNNED.
OH. WHAT'S WRONG, MOM?
OH.
FWAP
FWAP
FWAP

...
...DO YOU WANT, SEIICHI?
WHAT...
DAD
HE'S SO WEIRD.
FWIK
I DON'T ALWAYS COME HOME LATE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU'RE HOME EARLY TODAY, HUH, HARUMI?
GLANCE
TAKUYA ...
HUH?
YOU GO AHEAD AND MAKE DINNER, HARUMI.
UM...I JUST STOPPED BY TO SEE TAKUYA AND MINORU.
THEY SEEMED FINE.
MINORU'S DOWN HERE.
WSP
HOW WERE TOMOKO AND MY MOM?
WELL? HOW DID IT GO?
WSP

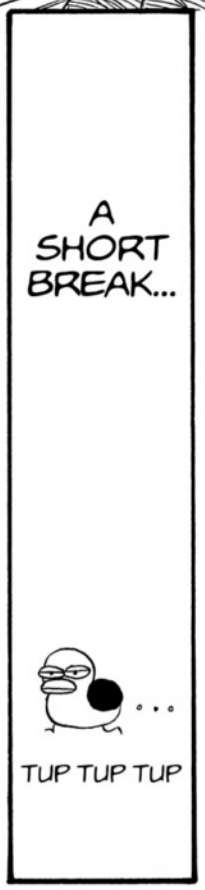
Ashtray
THEY WERE? GOOD. I'M GLAD I SENT IN AN OBSERVATION TEAM.
DAD
HEH HEH
OH!

THEY WERE TALKING AND SMILING WHEN WE LEFT.
YEAH.

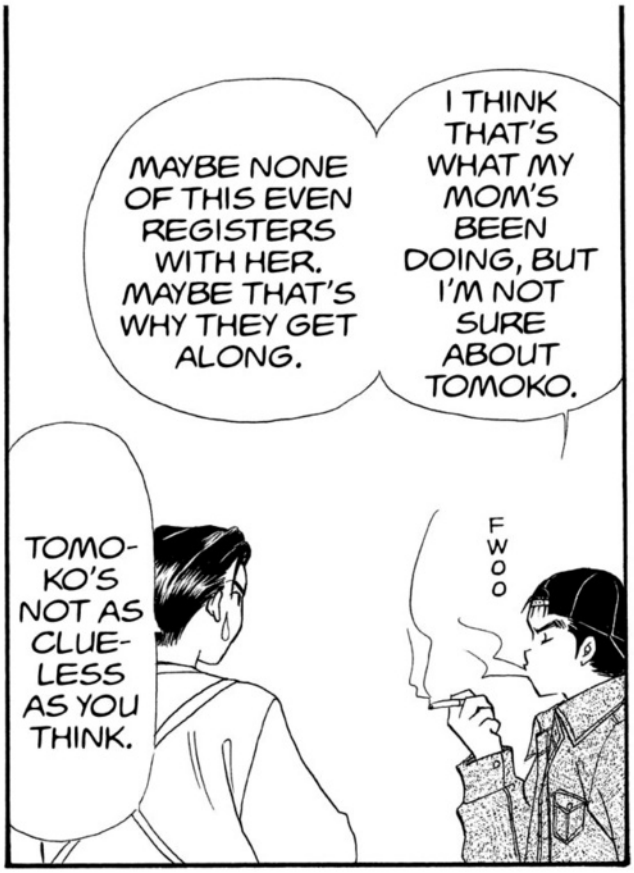
FINE? YOU SURE?
HUH?
FWOO


DAD! YOU'RE SCARY!
AAH!!
YOU USED MY KIDS AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?
OOF!!

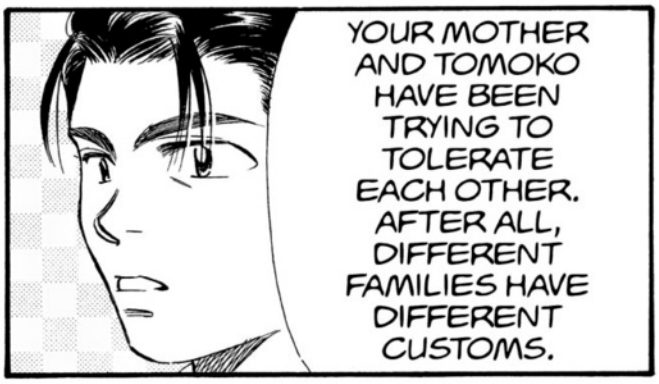
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO ASSAULT ME.
THAT'S NOT SOME-THING I'M FAMILIAR WITH.
YOUR WIFE AND MOTHER ARE FIGHTING, EH?
BUT THEY WEREN'T REALLY FIGHTING!


A SHORT BREAK...
...
TUP TUP TUP

OH YEAH? THEN WHY ARE YOU USING CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH IT?
HARUMI! THERE'S A SERIOUS SITUATION AT OUR HOUSE!
YOU MAKE THAT SOUND LIKE A BAD THING!


I THINK THAT'S WHAT MY MOM'S BEEN DOING, BUT I'M NOT SURE ABOUT TOMOKO.
MAYBE NONE OF THIS EVEN REGISTERS WITH HER. MAYBE THAT'S WHY THEY GET ALONG.
TOMO-KO'S NOT AS CLUE-LESS AS YOU THINK.
FWOO

MAYBE IT'S WEIRD THAT THEY NEVER FOUGHT BEFORE.
THERE MUST BE THINGS THEY DON'T LIKE ABOUT EACH OTHER.

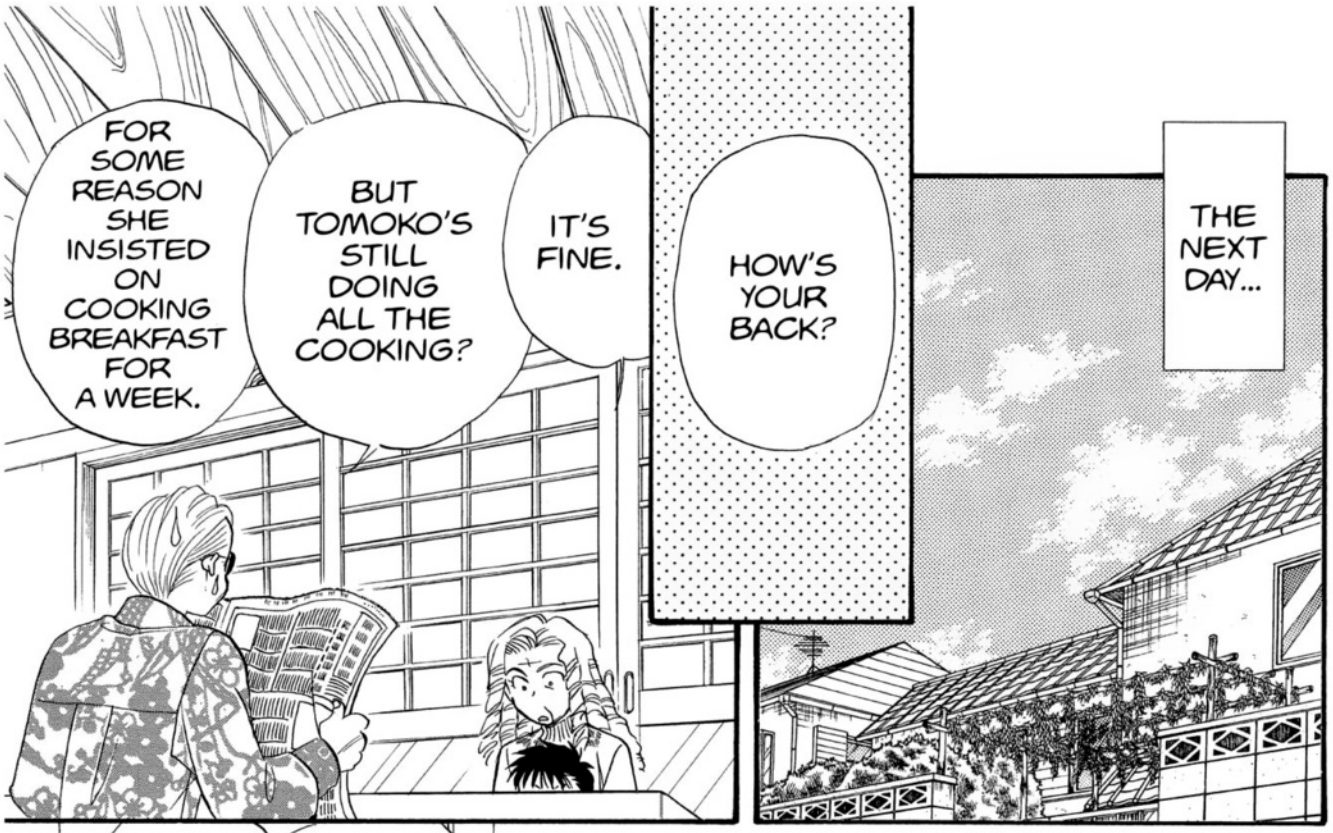

YOUR MOTHER AND TOMOKO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO TOLERATE EACH OTHER. AFTER ALL, DIFFERENT FAMILIES HAVE DIFFERENT CUSTOMS.

YOU THINK YOU KNOW TOMOKO PRETTY WELL, HUH, HARUMI?
YOU'RE A REAL LADIES' MAN.
WIP

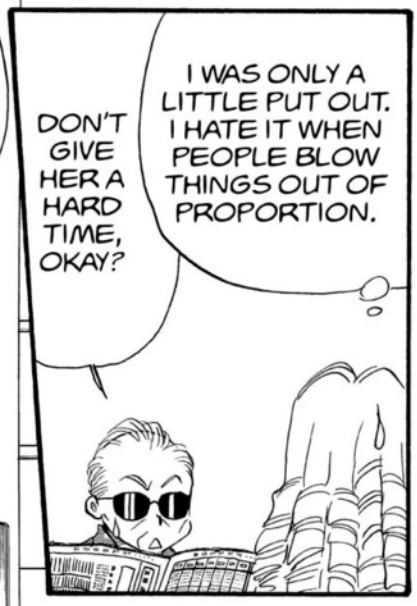
SHE JUST KNOWS WHEN TO TURN A BLIND EYE.
...
SHE'S PROBABLY HOLDING IT ALL IN.

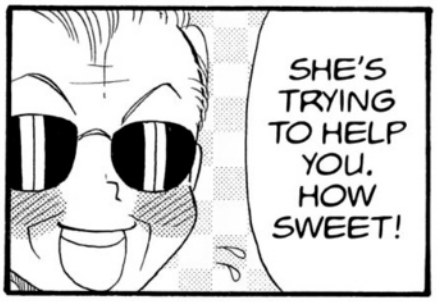
I CAN'T FOLLOW ANY OF THIS.
I WISH WE COULD EAT DINNER.
YAP
THIS IS PROBABLY ALL YOUR FAULT, SEIICHI!
NO! THE OLD LADY DECIDED TO GET MAD ALL BY HERSELF!
YAP
GURGLE
ZZZ

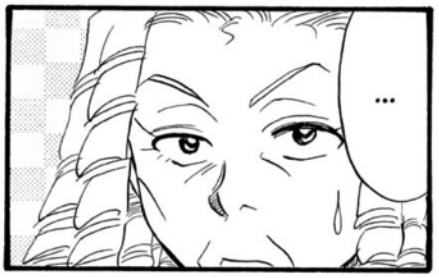
NOW YOU'RE JEALOUS? YOU ASKED FOR MY ADVICE!!
WOINGS
UGAGA!

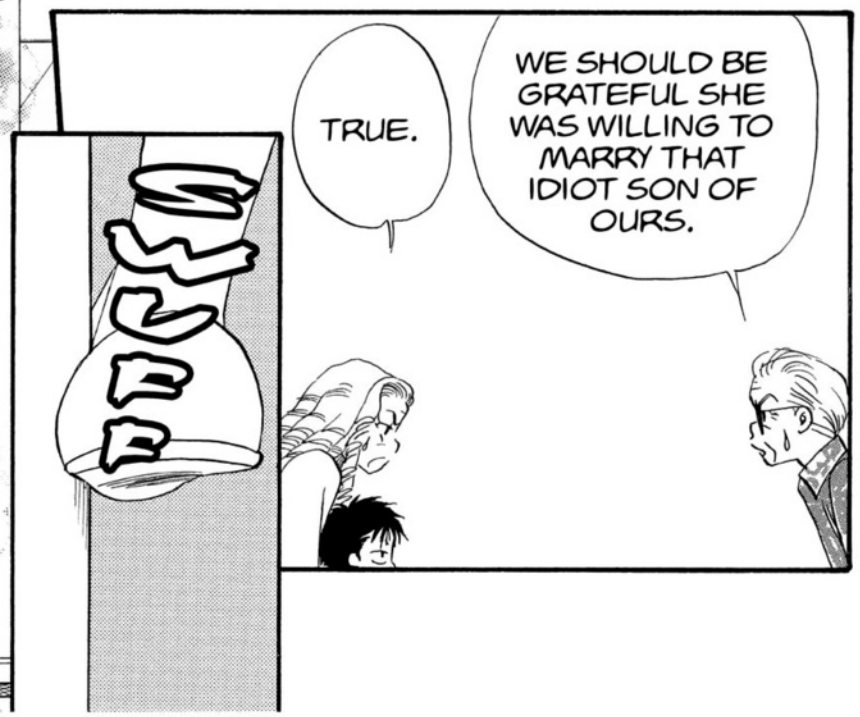

THE NEXT DAY...
HOW'S YOUR BACK?
IT'S FINE.
BUT TOMOKO'S STILL DOING ALL THE COOKING?
FOR SOME REASON SHE INSISTED ON COOKING BREAKFAST FOR A WEEK.

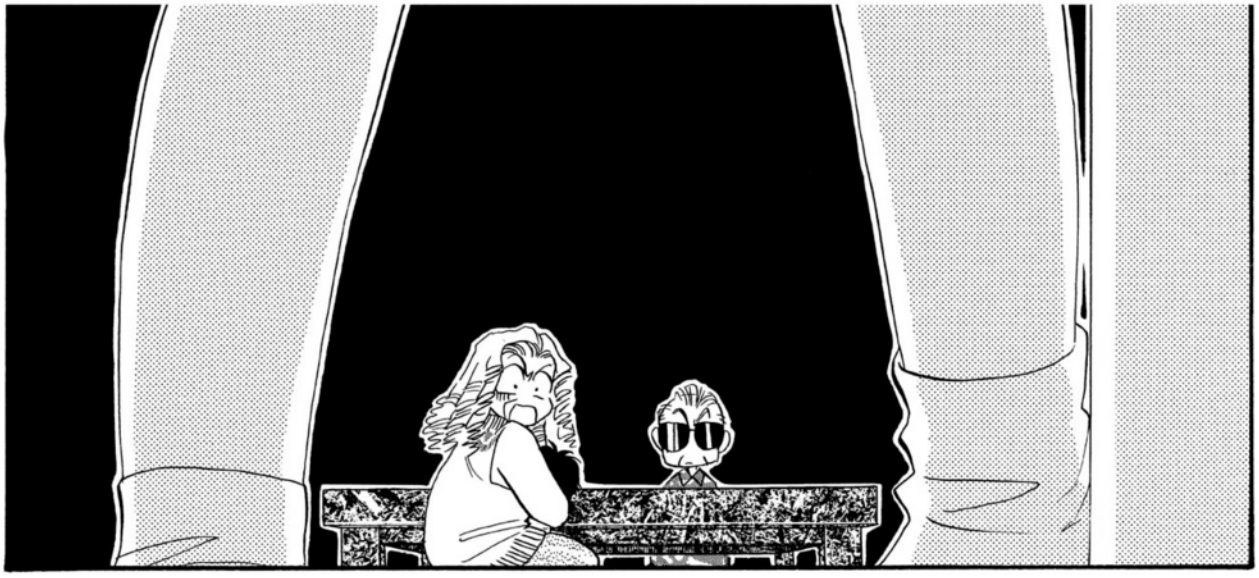
BREAKFAST IS READY!
OKAY!
SWUFF


DON'T GIVE HER A HARD TIME, OKAY?
I WAS ONLY A LITTLE PUT OUT. I HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE BLOW THINGS OUT OF PROPORTION.


SHE'S TRYING TO HELP YOU. HOW SWEET!

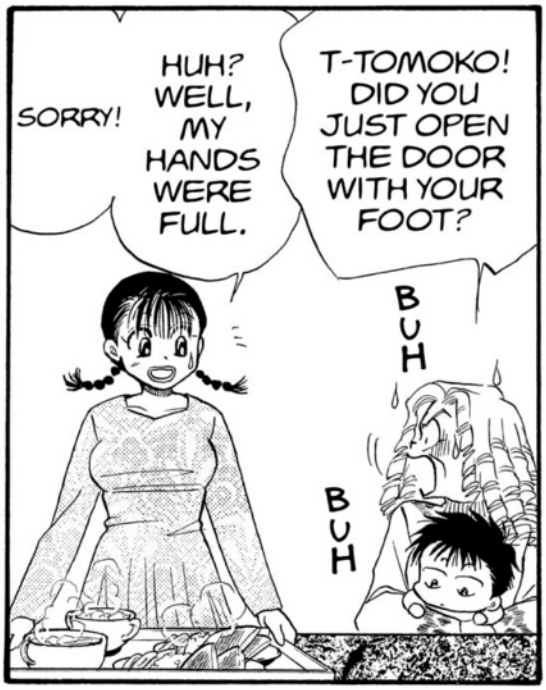

...

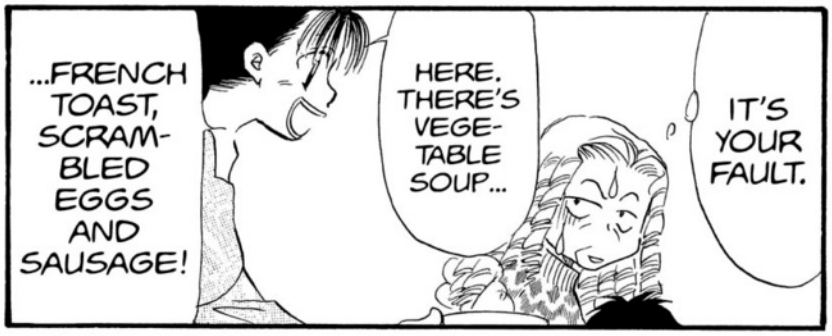

WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL SHE WAS WILLING TO MARRY THAT IDIOT SON OF OURS.
TRUE.
SWUFF

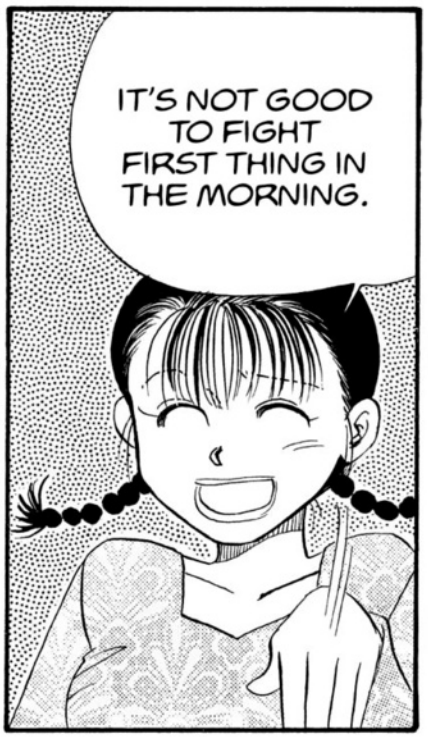


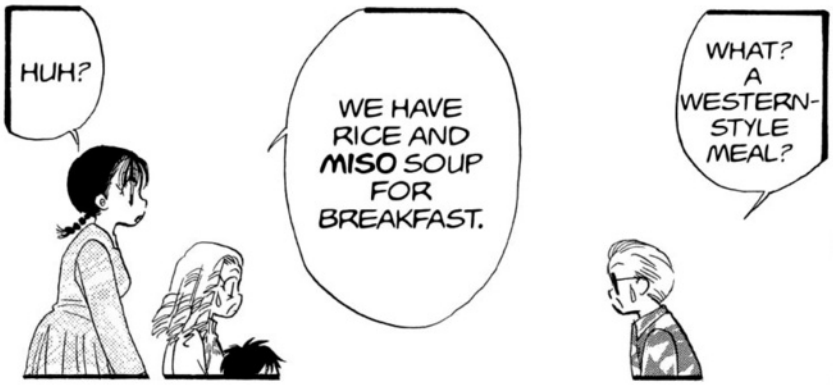
THOOM
SHRINK

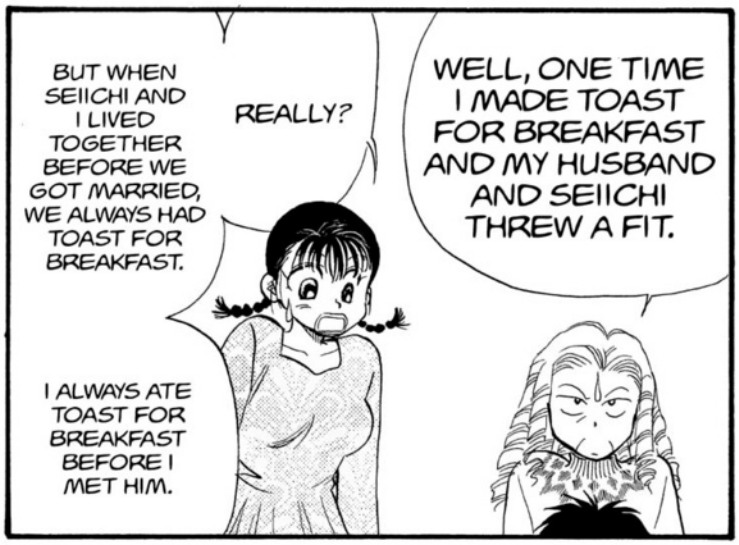
SEIICHI ALWAYS DOES THAT. HE WORKS THE REMOTE WITH HIS FOOT TOO.


T-TOMOKO! DID YOU JUST OPEN THE DOOR WITH YOUR FOOT?
HUH? WELL, MY HANDS WERE FULL.
SORRY!
BUH
BUH

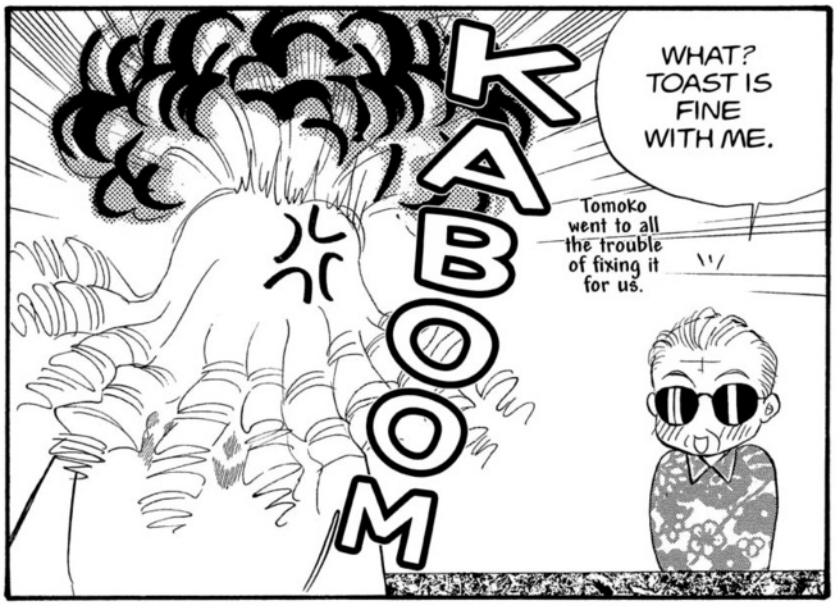

...FRENCH TOAST, SCRAMBLED EGGS AND SAUSAGE!
HERE. THERE'S VEGETABLE SOUP...
IT'S YOUR FAULT.

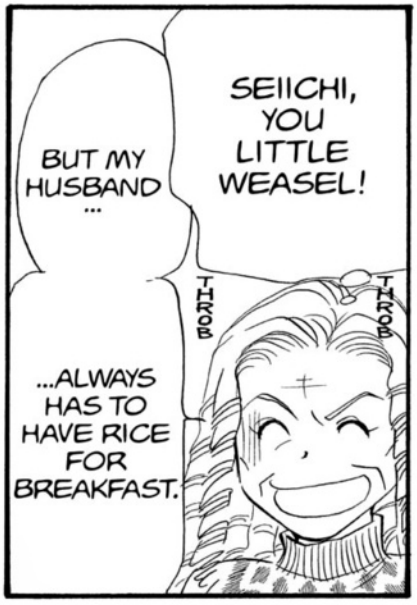

IT'S NOT GOOD TO FIGHT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.


HUH?
WE HAVE RICE AND MISO SOUP FOR BREAKFAST.
WHAT? A WESTERN-STYLE MEAL?


BUT WHEN SEIICHI AND I LIVED TOGETHER BEFORE WE GOT MARRIED, WE ALWAYS HAD TOAST FOR BREAKFAST.
REALLY?
WELL, ONE TIME I MADE TOAST FOR BREAKFAST AND MY HUSBAND AND SEIICHI THREW A FIT.
I ALWAYS ATE TOAST FOR BREAKFAST BEFORE I MET HIM.

OH, IS THAT THE RULE?
I THOUGHT THAT WAS JUST WHAT YOU LIKED TO MAKE.

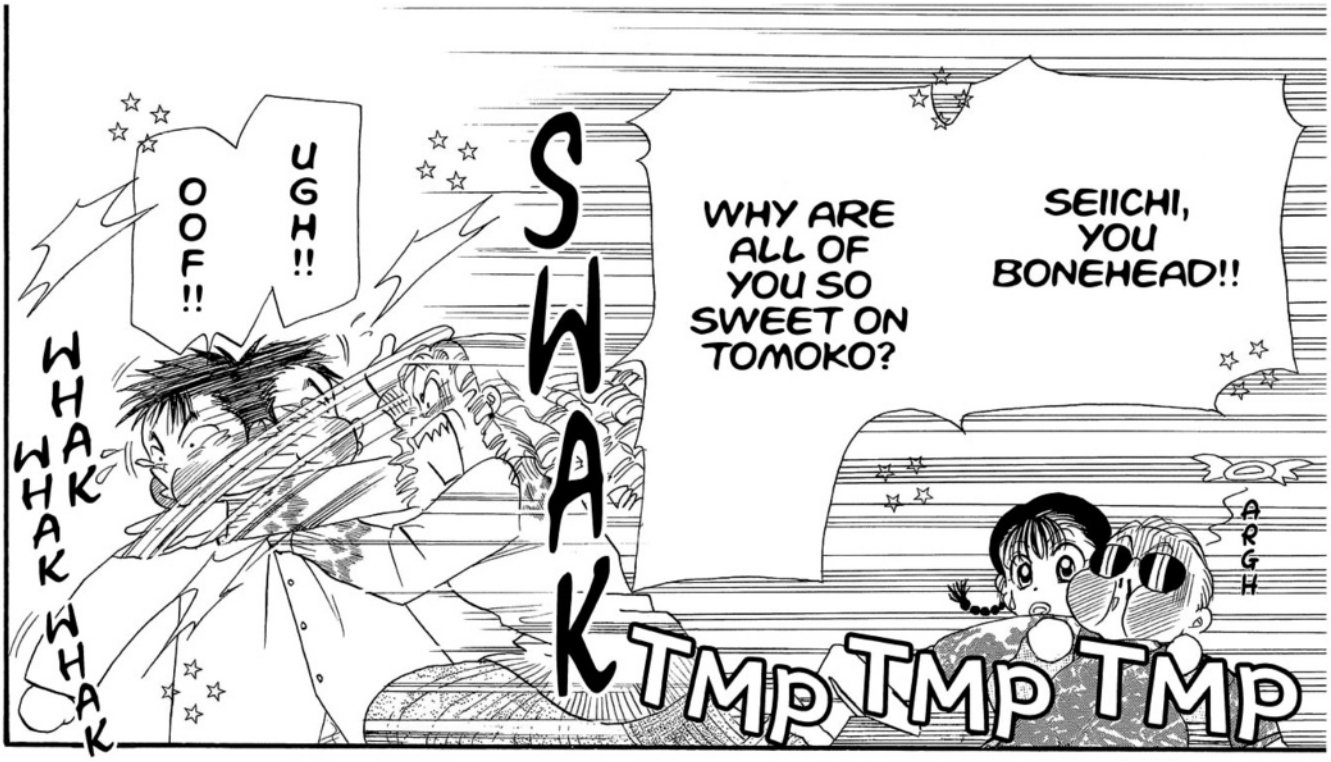

KABOOM
WHAT? TOAST IS FINE WITH ME.
Tomoko went to all the trouble of fixing it for us.

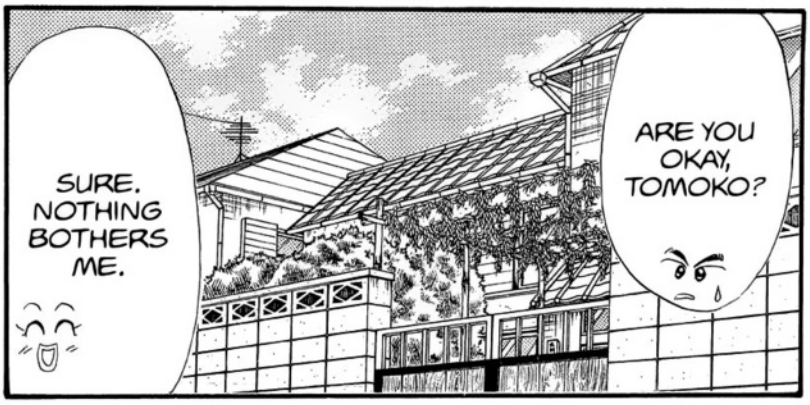

SEIICHI, YOU LITTLE WEASEL!
BUT MY HUSBAND ...
THROB
THROB
...ALWAYS HAS TO HAVE RICE FOR BREAKFAST.

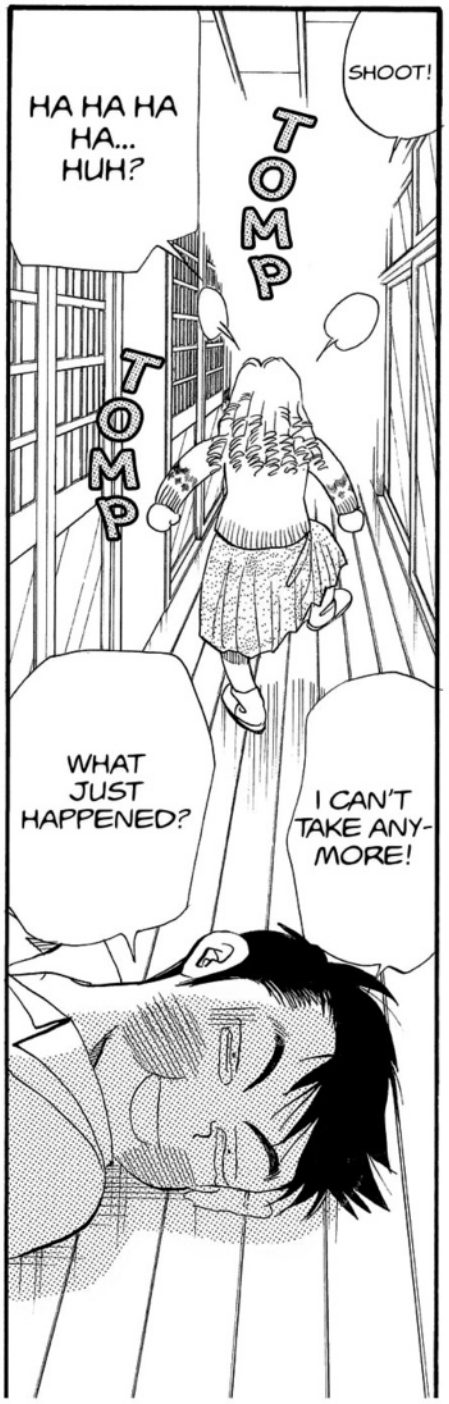
MORNING.
ZOON
HUH?

I'M ON THE FIRST SHIFT TODAY. I HATE THAT.
SO SLEEPY ...
FLAP
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
FLAP

UGH...


SEIICHI, YOU BONEHEAD!!
WHY ARE ALL OF YOU SO SWEET ON TOMOKO?
SWAK
UGH!!
OOF!!
WHAK WHAK WHAK WHAK
ARGH
TMP TMP TMP


ARE YOU OKAY, TOMOKO?
SURE. NOTHING BOTHERS ME.


SHOOT!
HA HA HA HA... HUH?
TOMP
TOMP
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
I CAN'T TAKE ANY-MORE!

KLAK KLAK
SIGH...

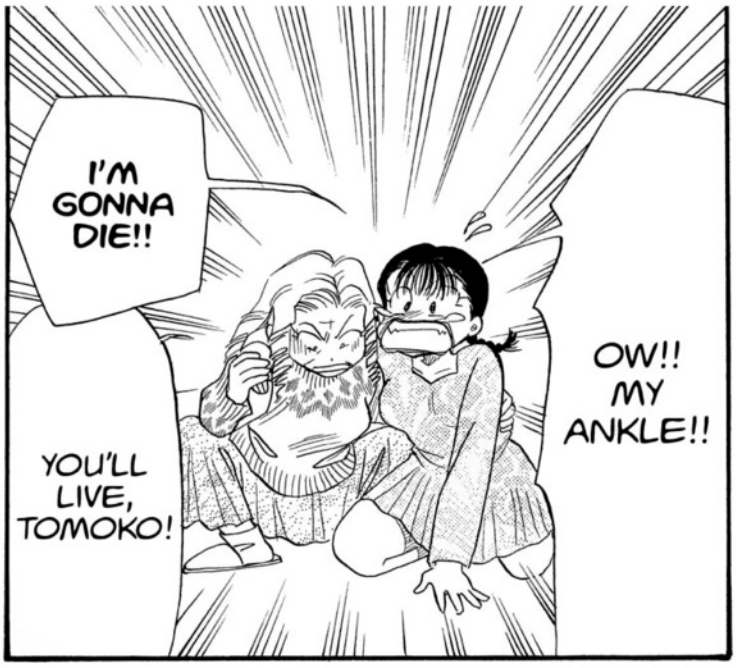
YEAH, 'CAUSE IT WAS DAD AND ME SHE WAS MAD AT!
OKAY, GO TO WORK!

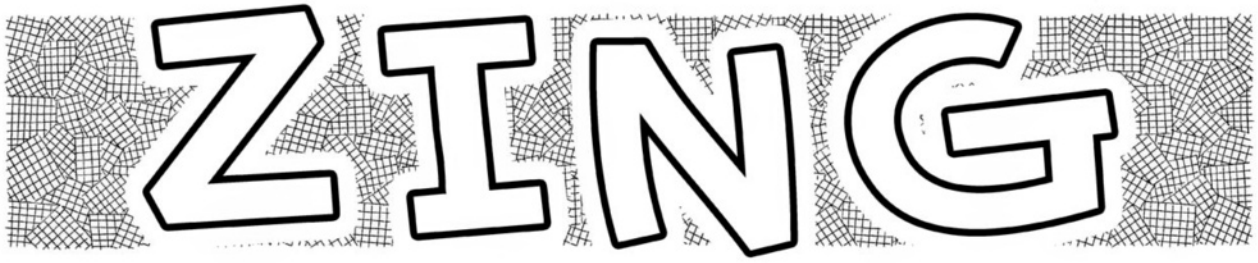
PLUP

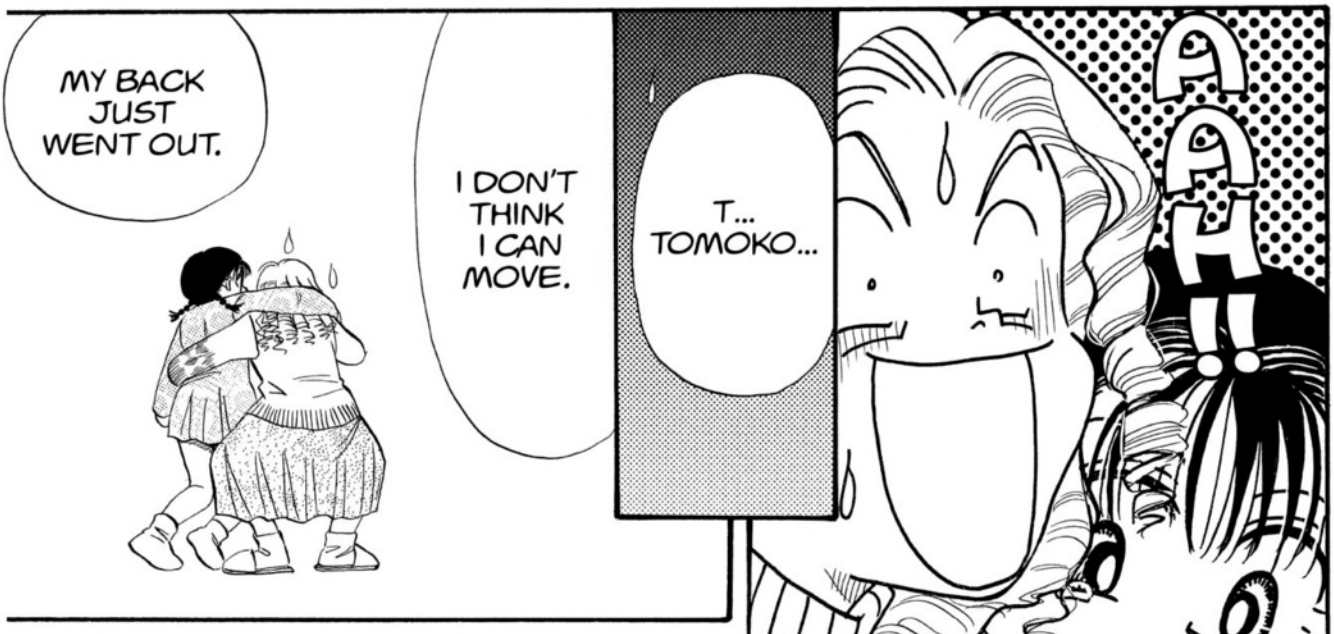
MOM DOESN'T LIKE ME ANYMORE!
SOB
SOB
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, THINGS ALWAYS TURN OUT WRONG!
HUH?
SZ-LL
AAAH
YIPE!!
UDA
YACK
YACK
He's having fun
I ALWAYS KNEW TOMOKO WAS A LITTLE SPACEY...
...BUT CAN I RELY ON HER IN AN EMER-GENCY? I WORRY ABOUT THAT.
SIGH
SLURP
SLURP
SIGH

AAAAH!!
BOOM BOOM BOOM
SPLOOSH
WH...WHAT THE...
PLIP
PLIP
OH!
OUCH!
IT HURTS!!
TOMOKO!! WHAT HAPPENED?
I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS.
IS TAICHI ALL RIGHT?
WHERE DOES IT HURT? CAN YOU MOVE?
I HURT ALL OVER, BUT MY ANKLE'S THE WORST. I TWISTED IT.
IS IT SPRAINED? HERE, HOLD ONTO ME.
UNH
UNH
AAH!!

LET'S STAND UP. HERE... WE... GO!
TUG
SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN.


I'M GONNA DIE!!
YOU'LL LIVE, TOMOKO!
OW!! MY ANKLE!!

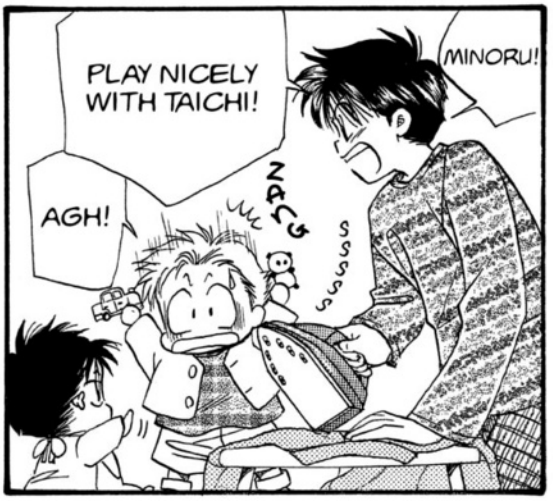

ZING

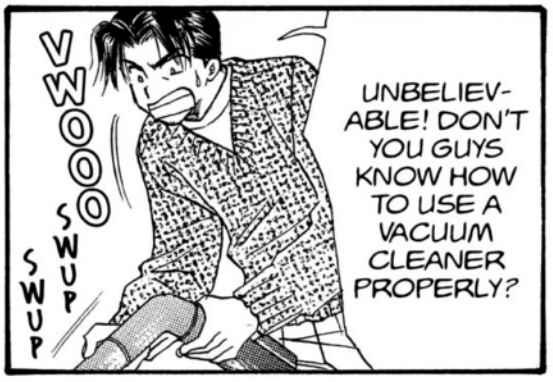

MY BACK JUST WENT OUT.
I DON'T THINK I CAN MOVE.
T... TOMOKO...
AAH!!

WHAT?
DID YOU SLIP A DISK?

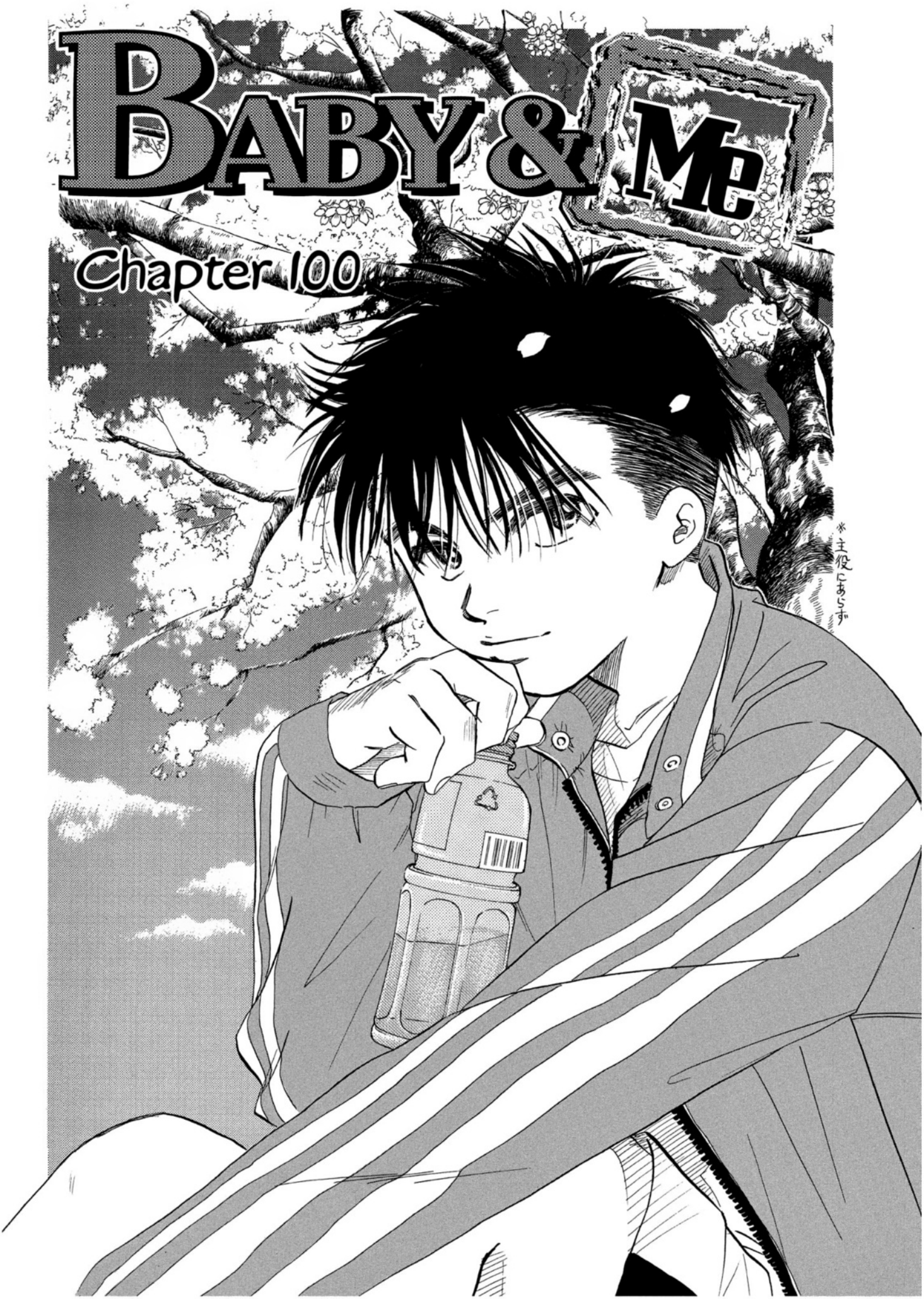
I GUESS ...
...WE'RE STUCK HERE.
HA HA HA!
ADA!
...
GRR
ZING
GRR
ZING
GRR
GRR
AGH!! I WON'T GIVE UP!!
WHUP
BANZAI!!

ZING
ZING
ZING
ZING
ZING
ZING
FOR-GET MY ANKLE.
IS YOUR ANKLE OKAY?
TOMOKO?
Y... YOU'RE...
...WORSE OFF THAN I AM!
SWAY
SWAY
TOUCHED
...AMAZING!
...YOUR COURAGE IS...
T... TOMOKO...
MOM'S HEAVIER THAN I THOUGHT.
I'LL NEVER NAG YOU AGAIN!
ZING
ZING





Chapter 99 / The End

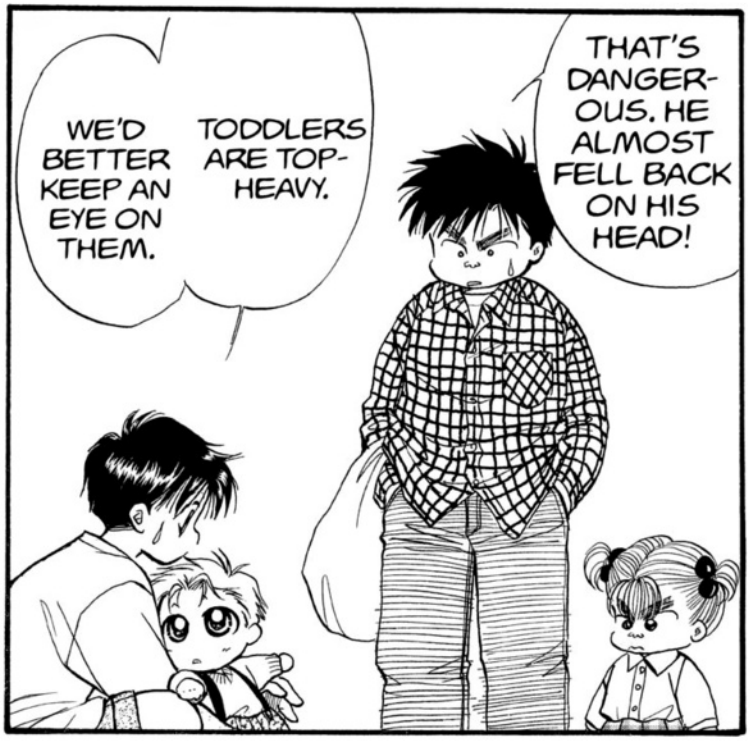

BABY & Me
Chapter 100
※主役にあらず

ZHING
AMA-JING...
ZHING
FUFF
FUFF
FUFF
FUFF
WHOA!
MINORU!
WHUP
THUMP

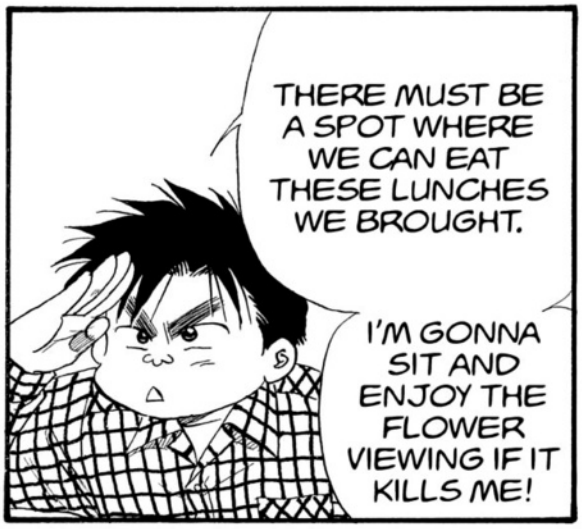
OKAY!!
THERE'S A NICE WAY TO SAY THAT.
SNAP

YOU HAVE TO WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
GEEZ!

IT'S SO CROWDED. THERE'S NOWHERE FOR US TO SIT.
BUT I CAN SEE HOW HE'D BE DISTRACTED BY ALL THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
RAH
RAH

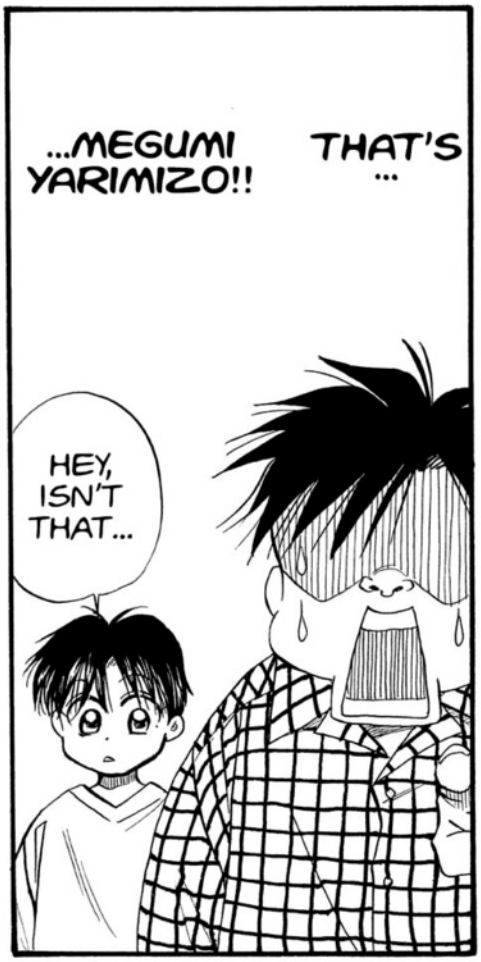

WE'D BETTER KEEP AN EYE ON THEM.
TODDLERS ARE TOP-HEAVY.
THAT'S DANGER-OUS. HE ALMOST FELL BACK ON HIS HEAD!

HEY!
THERE'S A LITTLE SPOT OVER THERE!
HUH? WHERE?

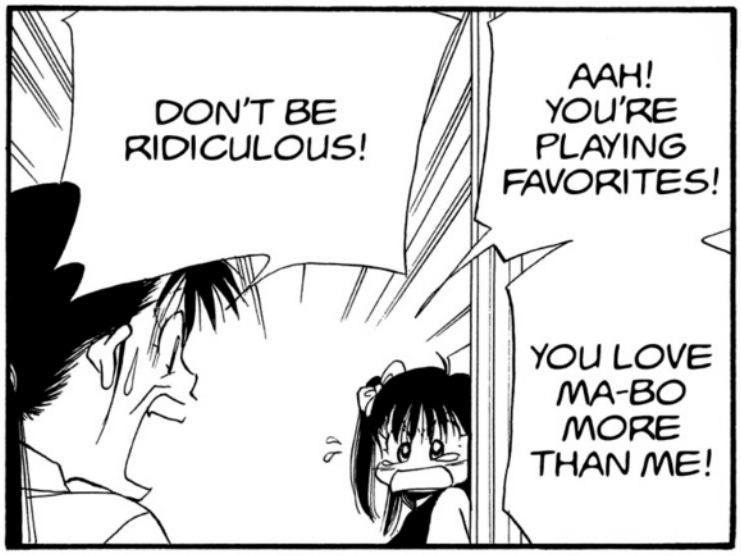

THERE MUST BE A SPOT WHERE WE CAN EAT THESE LUNCHES WE BROUGHT.
I'M GONNA SIT AND ENJOY THE FLOWER VIEWING IF IT KILLS ME!

THERE'S A LITTLE SPOT BETWEEN...
THAT GROUP OF FIVE OR SO?
SEE THAT GROUP OF MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN?
LOOK OVER THERE.
YEAH. AND THERE'S A GIRL WITH BOBBED HAIR ON THE OTHER SIDE.

...YARIMIZO?
ON SECOND THOUGHT, THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ROOM!
SHOVE
SHOVE
LET'S FIND ANOTHER SPOT!


...MEGUMI YARIMIZO!!
THAT'S ...
HEY, ISN'T THAT...

MEGUMI YARIMIZO ONCE REJECTED GON. (SEE VOLUME 4 FOR THE DETAILS.)
THIS IS SO COOL!
GUESS I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YARIMIZO.
I GUESS GON STILL ISN'T OVER YARIMIZO.
AHH
OKAY.
GRUMP
THE FUJII RESI-DENCE
ICHIKA! STOP COM-PLAINING AND STAY AWAY!
BUT YOU PROMISED TO TAKE ME FLOWER VIEWING TODAY. IT'S SATURDAY, YOU KNOW!
HMPH
HMPH
MA-BO HAS A COLD!

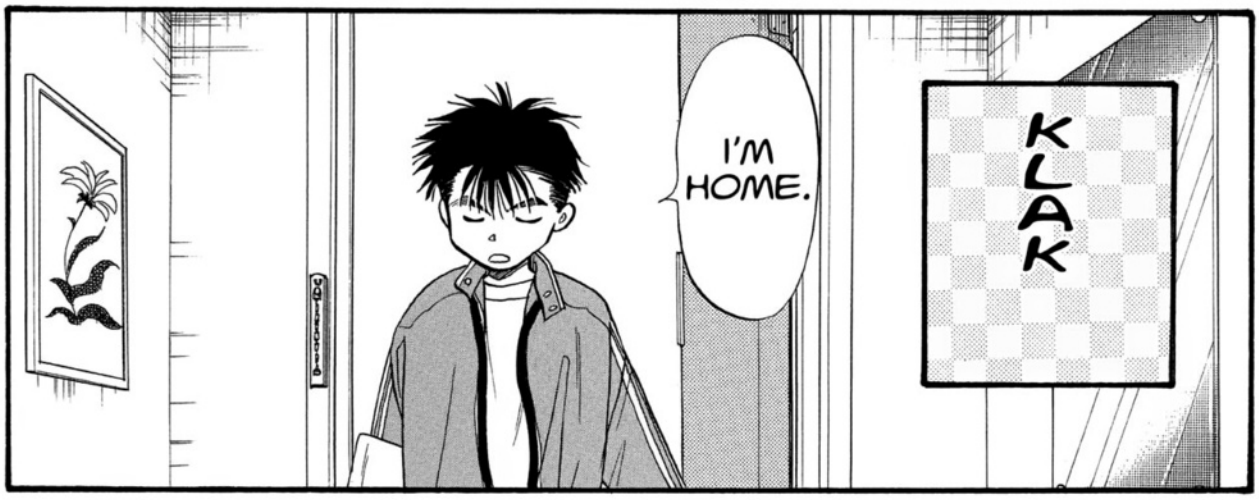

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
AAH! YOU'RE PLAYING FAVORITES!
YOU LOVE MA-BO MORE THAN ME!

I CAN'T HELP IT! YOUR SISTERS ARE OUT...
...AND I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MA-BO.

ICHIKA!
WAAAH
YOU MON-STER!
SOB
SOB

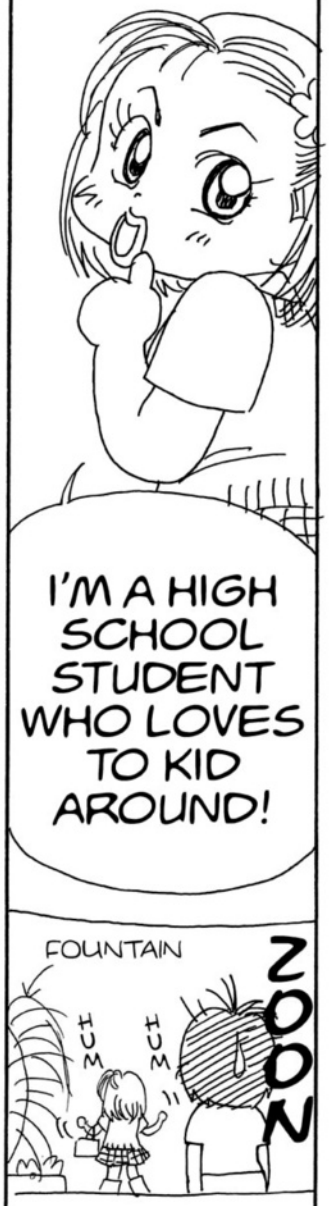
IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
HFF
HFF
I'M SORRY, ICHIKA.

I'M GOING TO EAT THAT GIANT ICE CREAM CONE OF YOURS!
THAT'S RIGHT! IT IS ALL YOUR FAULT! I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!


I'M HOME.
KLAK

Author's Note Part 3

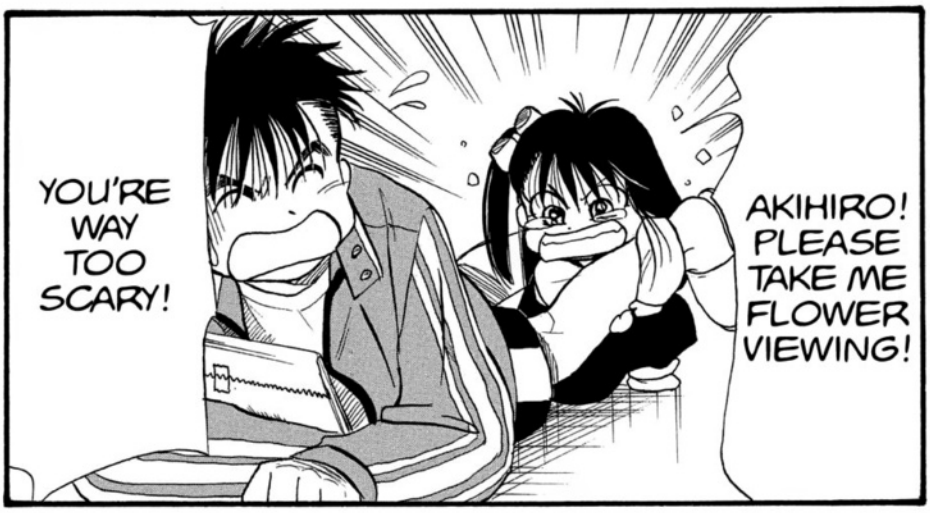
Continued from Part 2



That's how it was.
It was so realistic that when I woke up, I looked around and said, "Where'd that girl go?" Did this dream mean anything? Somebody analyze it for me!

Oh, I still have a tiny space left. What should I do?

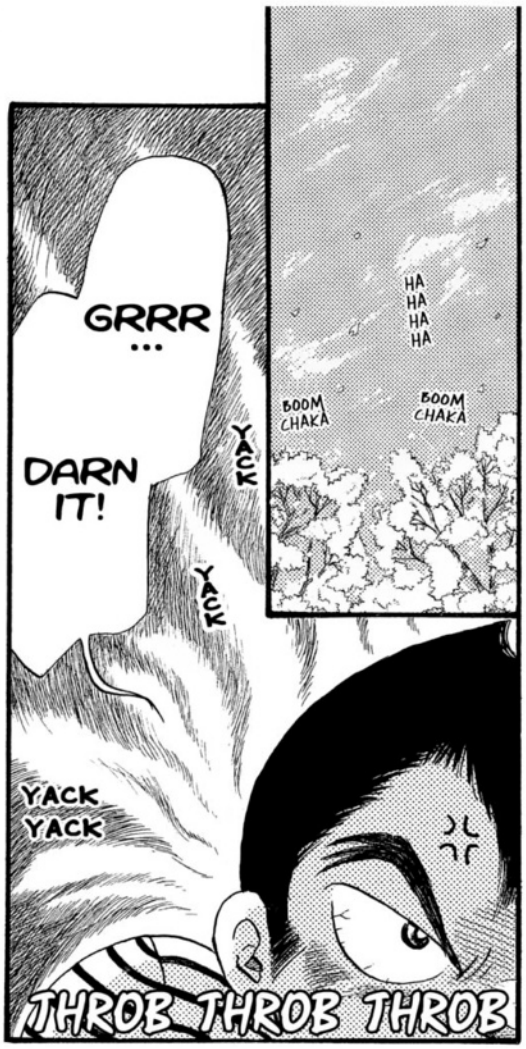
Koff Koff



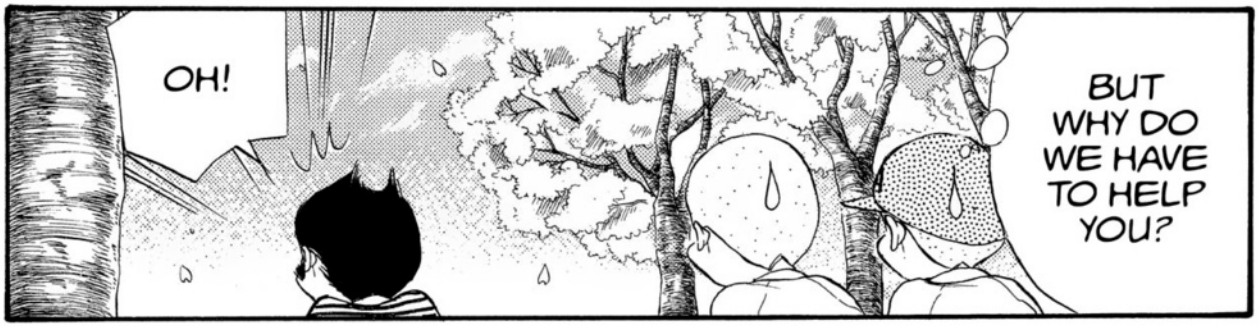
Gon Takuya

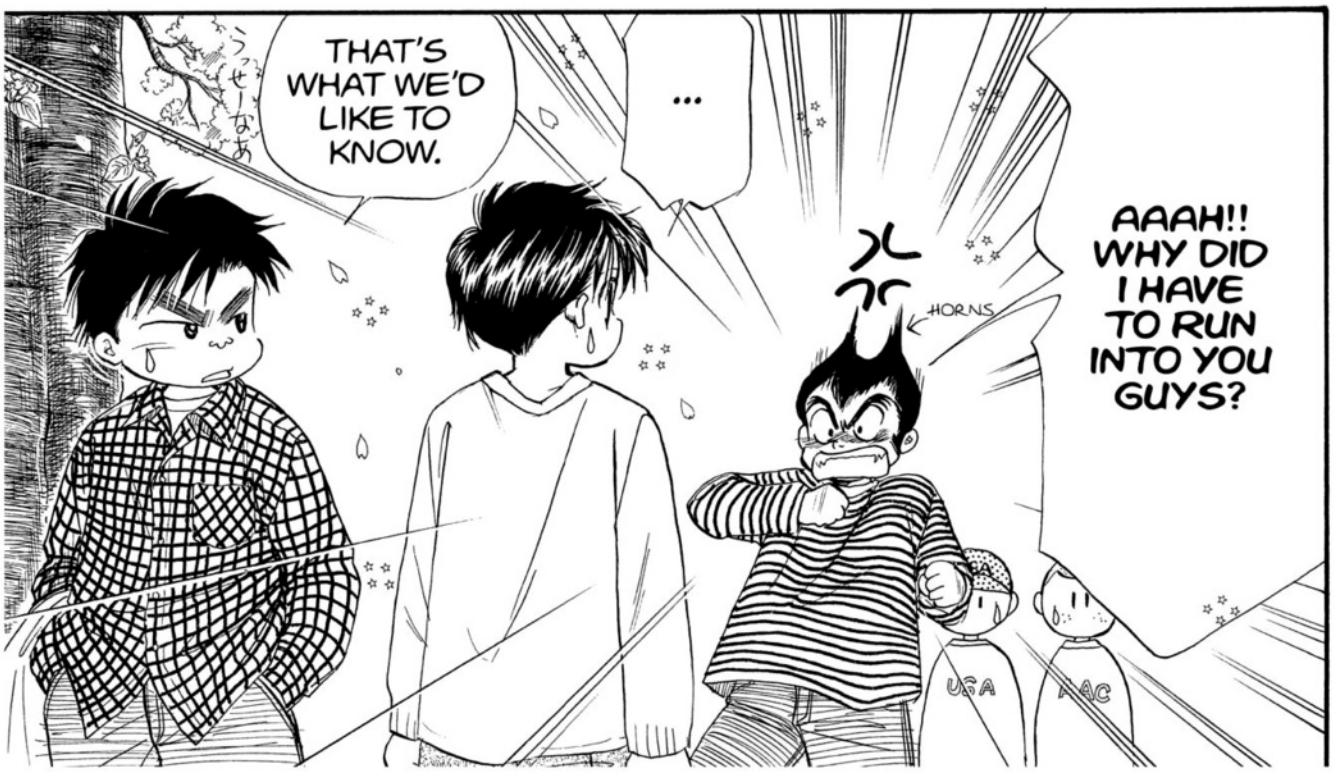
She's acting a little different.

THE CHERRY BLOS-SOMS ARE GREAT HERE.
SORRY, KUMADE.
MY CAT GOT OUT AND I CAN'T FIND HER ANYWHERE!
DON'T THESE PEOPLE HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAT LOAF AROUND HERE?
YACK
YACK
GRR
GRR


GRRR ...
DARN IT!
YACK
YACK
YACK YACK
HA HA HA HA
BOOM CHAKA
BOOM CHAKA
THROB THROB THROB

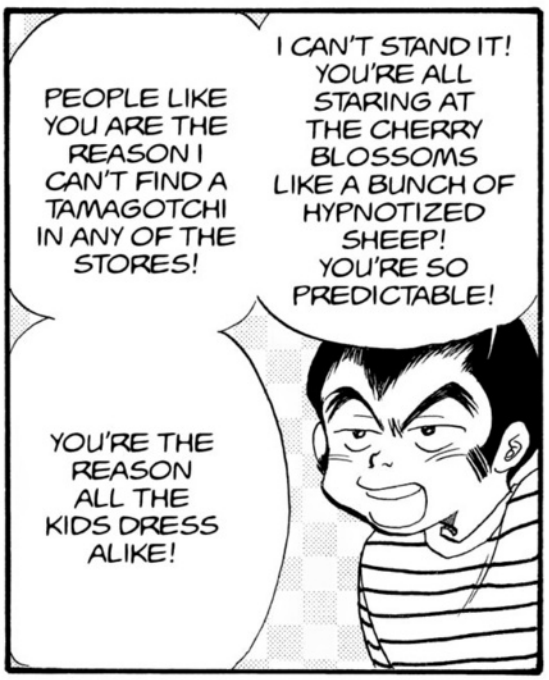
MY AGENDA FOR THE DAY IS TO FIND OUR CAT AND GIVE HER A BATH!
RATS! YOU GUYS ARE LAME TOO!
WHY DON'T WE SIT AND LOOK AT THEM AWHILE?

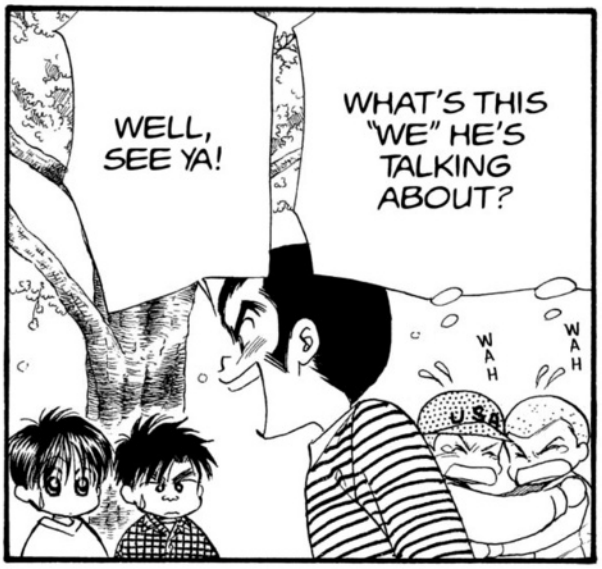

OH!
BUT WHY DO WE HAVE TO HELP YOU?

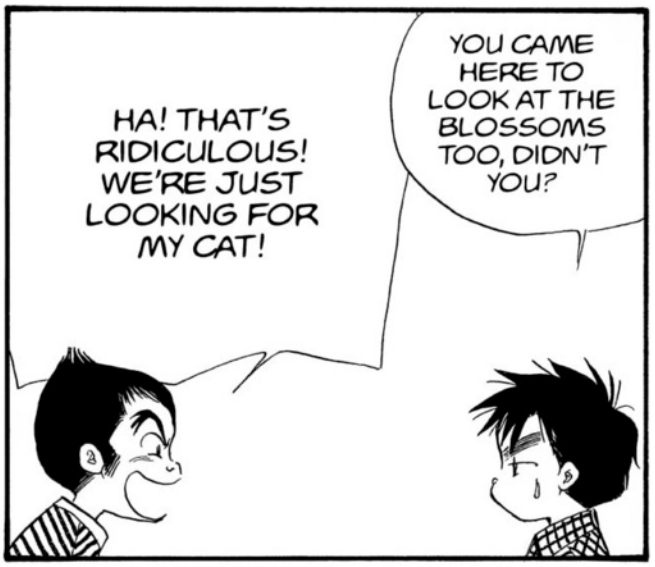

THAT'S WHAT WE'D LIKE TO KNOW.
...
HORNS
AAAH!! WHY DID I HAVE TO RUN INTO YOU GUYS?
USA
PAC

NO I'M NOT.
MONKEY?
HUH?

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT?


PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE THE REASON I CAN'T FIND A TAMAGOTCHI IN ANY OF THE STORES!
I CAN'T STAND IT! YOU'RE ALL STARING AT THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS LIKE A BUNCH OF HYPNOTIZED SHEEP! YOU'RE SO PREDICTABLE!
YOU'RE THE REASON ALL THE KIDS DRESS ALIKE!

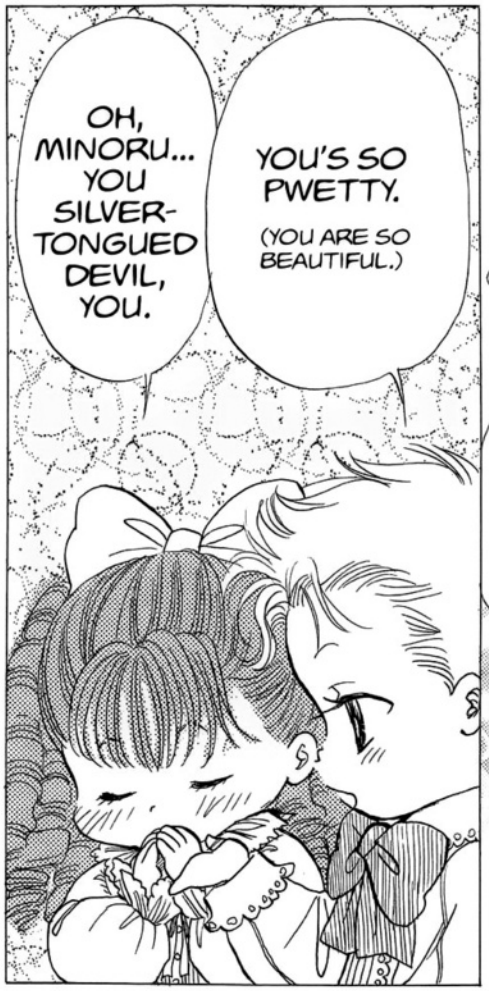

WELL, SEE YA!
WHAT'S THIS "WE" HE'S TALKING ABOUT?
WAH
WAH

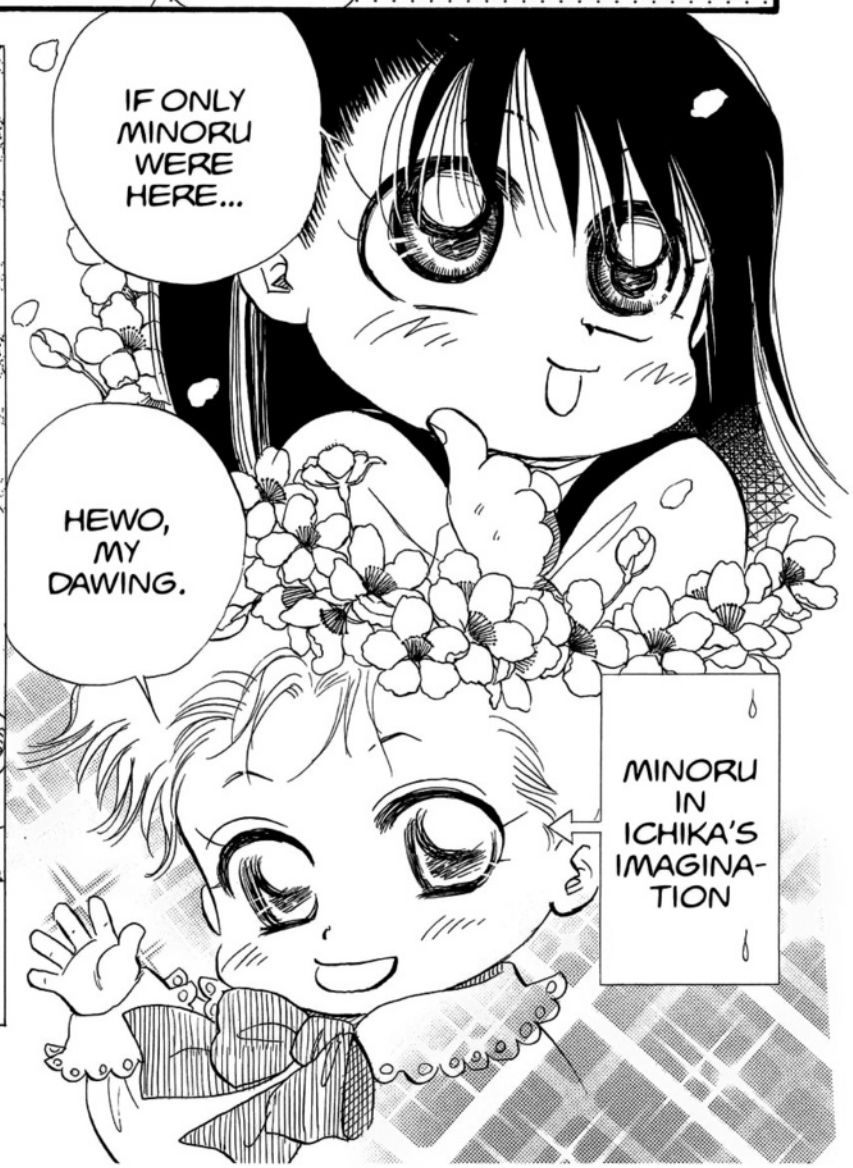

HA! THAT'S RIDICULOUS! WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR MY CAT!
YOU CAME HERE TO LOOK AT THE BLOSSOMS TOO, DIDN'T YOU?

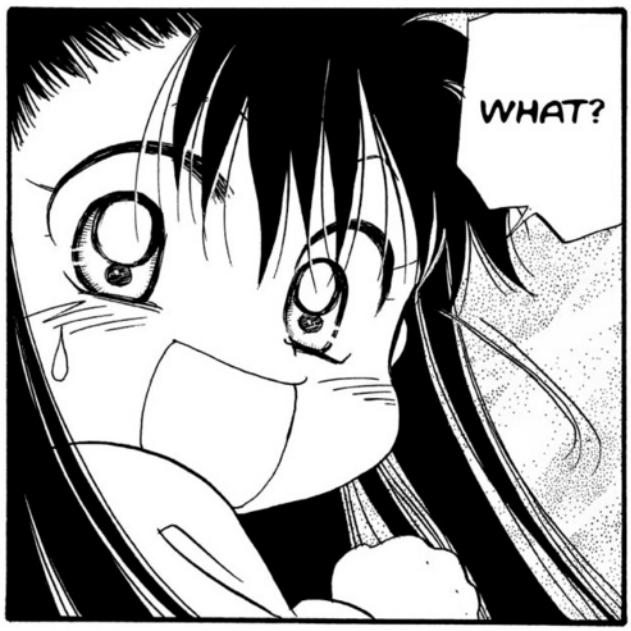
SWUFF
AHH!
SPRING-TIME!
SWUFF

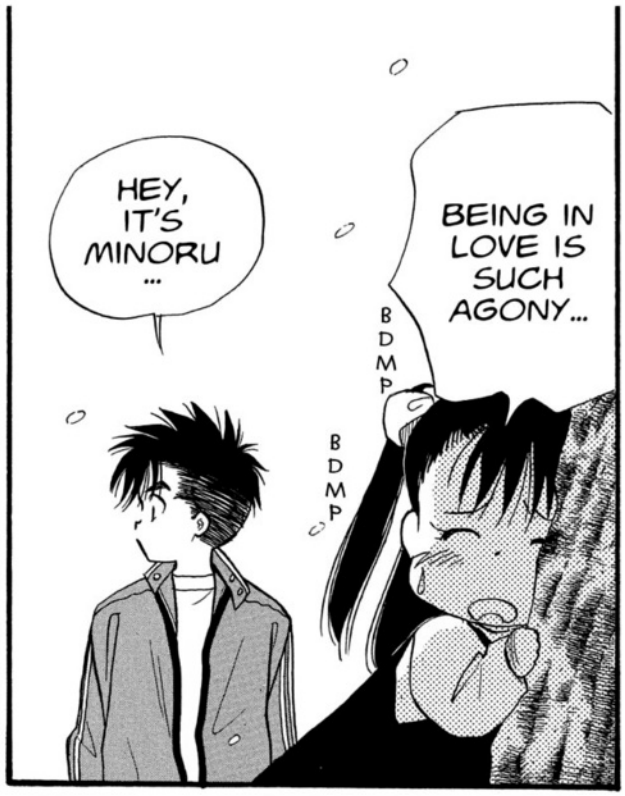
NEITHER DID I. BUT THE MURATA BROTHERS WERE CRYING.
I DIDN'T KNOW KUMADE HAD A CAT.
SOB
SOB
HMPH!

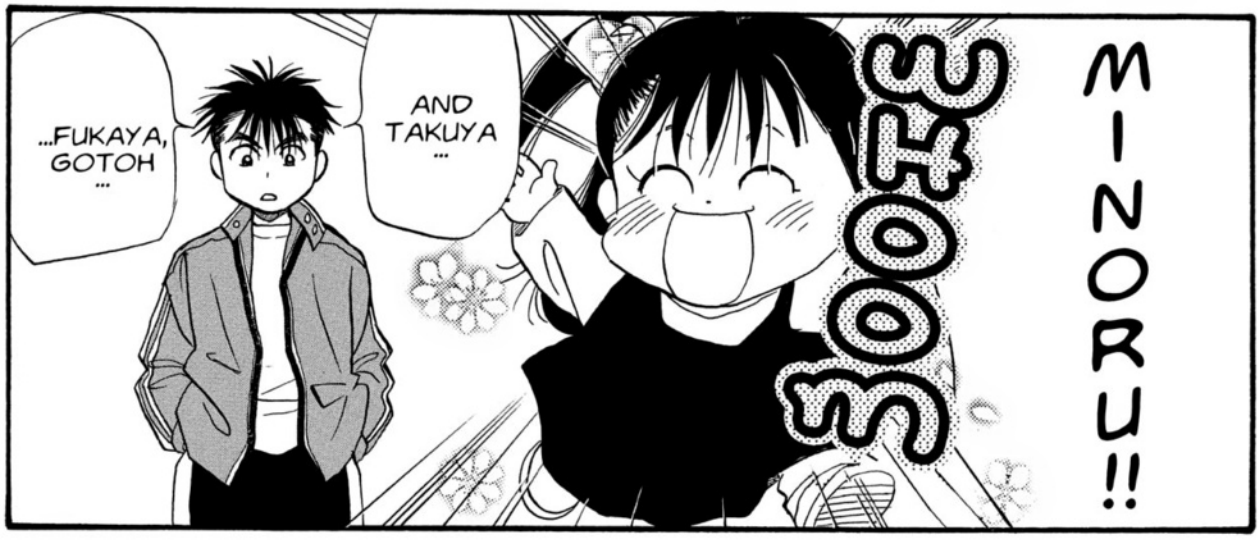
SPRING IS THE SEASON OF LOVE! AKIHIRO, DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE IN LOVE?
AHHH
I'M SO EXCITED.
NOT REALLY.
WHY?
YOU COULD LEARN FROM ME!
UNBELIEVABLE. YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF ROMANCE!


OH, MINORU... YOU SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL, YOU.
YOU'S SO PWETTY.
(YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL.)

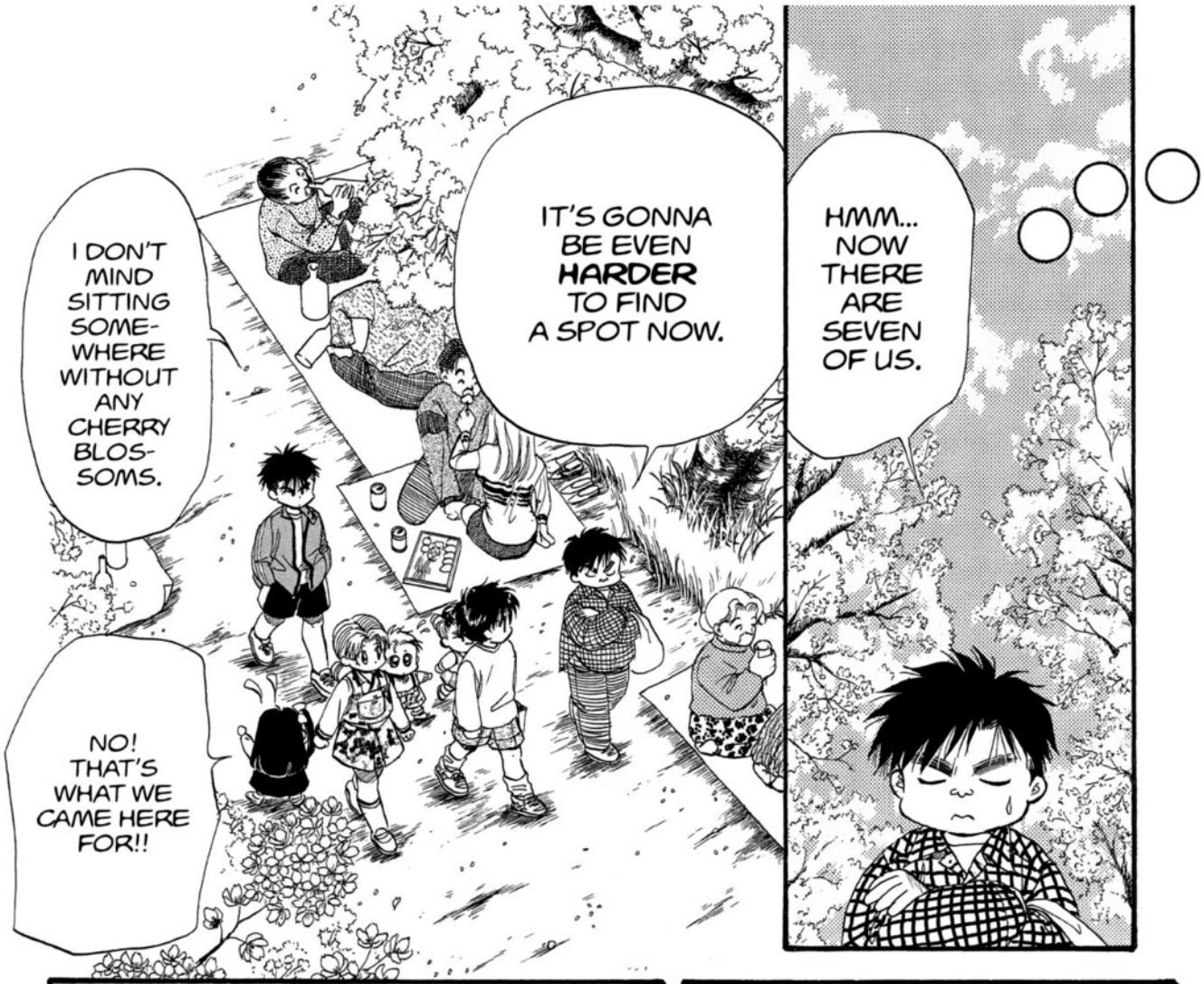

IF ONLY MINORU WERE HERE...
HEWO, MY DAWING.
MINORU IN ICHIKA'S IMAGINATION

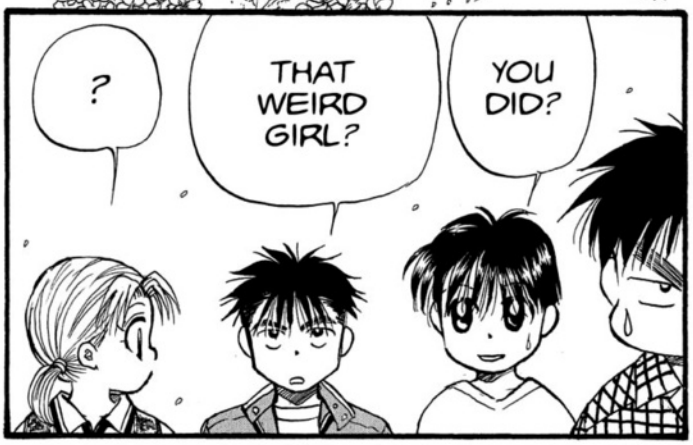

WHAT?

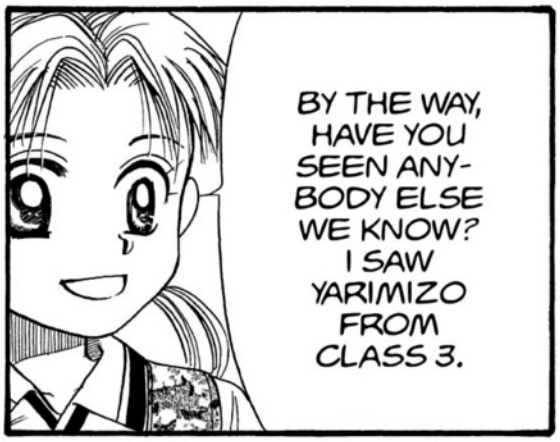

HEY, IT'S MINORU ...
BEING IN LOVE IS SUCH AGONY...
BDMP
BDMP

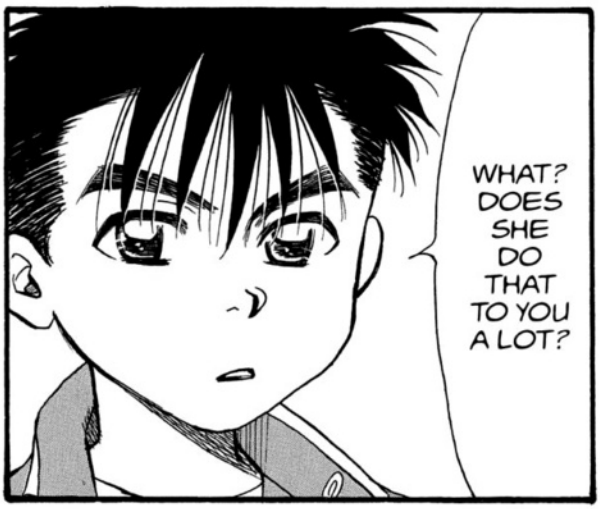

MINORU!!
SOOKI
AND TAKUYA ...
...FUKAYA, GOTOH ...

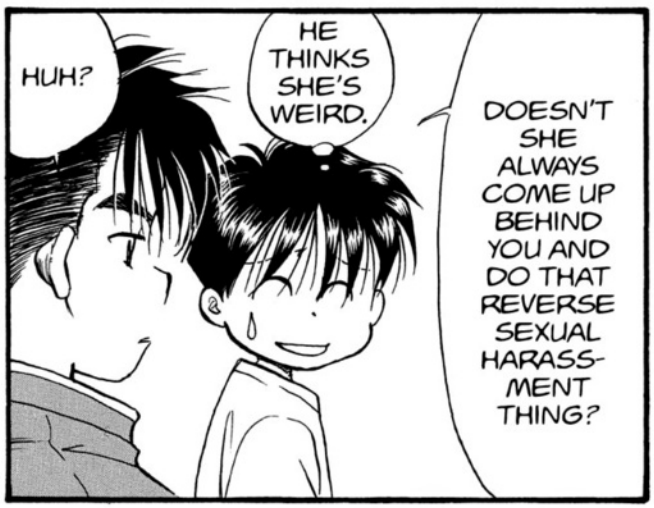
...AND HIS SISTER.
UGH!!
WHAK
SMACK DOWN


I DON'T MIND SITTING SOME-WHERE WITHOUT ANY CHERRY BLOS-SOMS.
IT'S GONNA BE EVEN HARDER TO FIND A SPOT NOW.
HMM... NOW THERE ARE SEVEN OF US.
NO! THAT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR!!

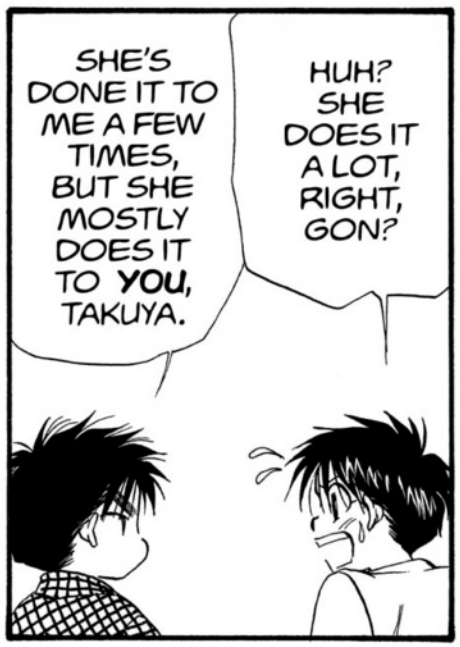

?
THAT WEIRD GIRL?
YOU DID?


BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY-BODY ELSE WE KNOW? I SAW YARIMIZO FROM CLASS 3.

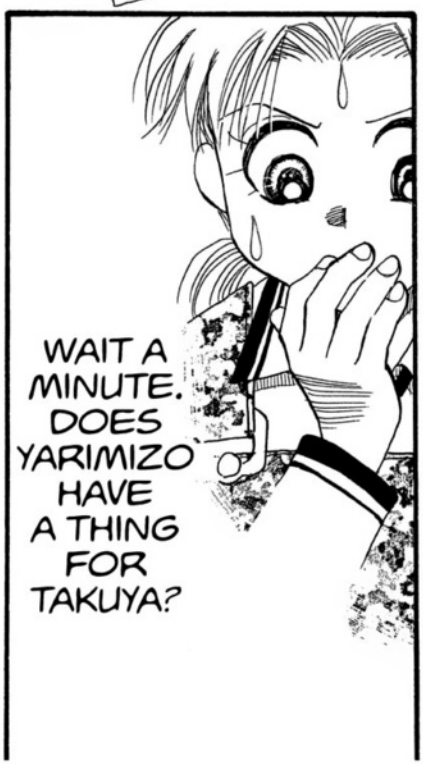

WHAT? DOES SHE DO THAT TO YOU A LOT?

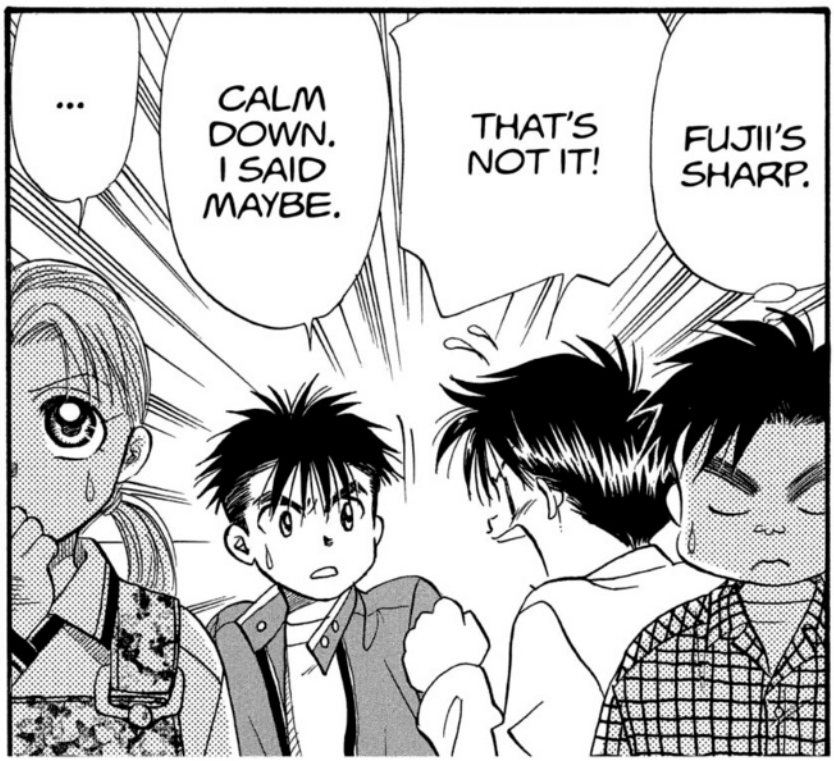

HUH?
HE THINKS SHE'S WEIRD.
DOESN'T SHE ALWAYS COME UP BEHIND YOU AND DO THAT REVERSE SEXUAL HARASS-MENT THING?

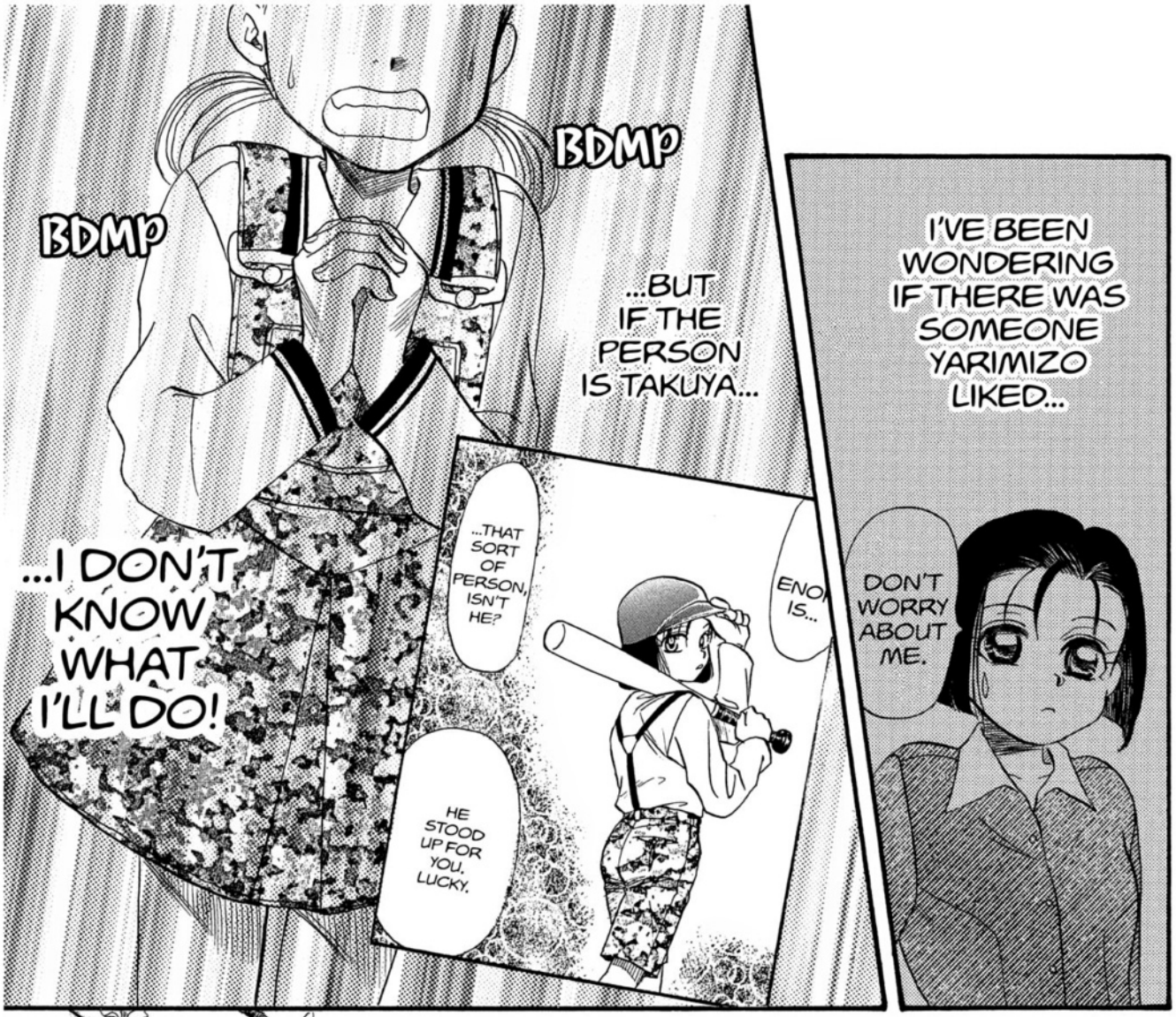
MAYBE IT'S JUST BECAUSE HIS GUARD IS ALWAYS DOWN...
...

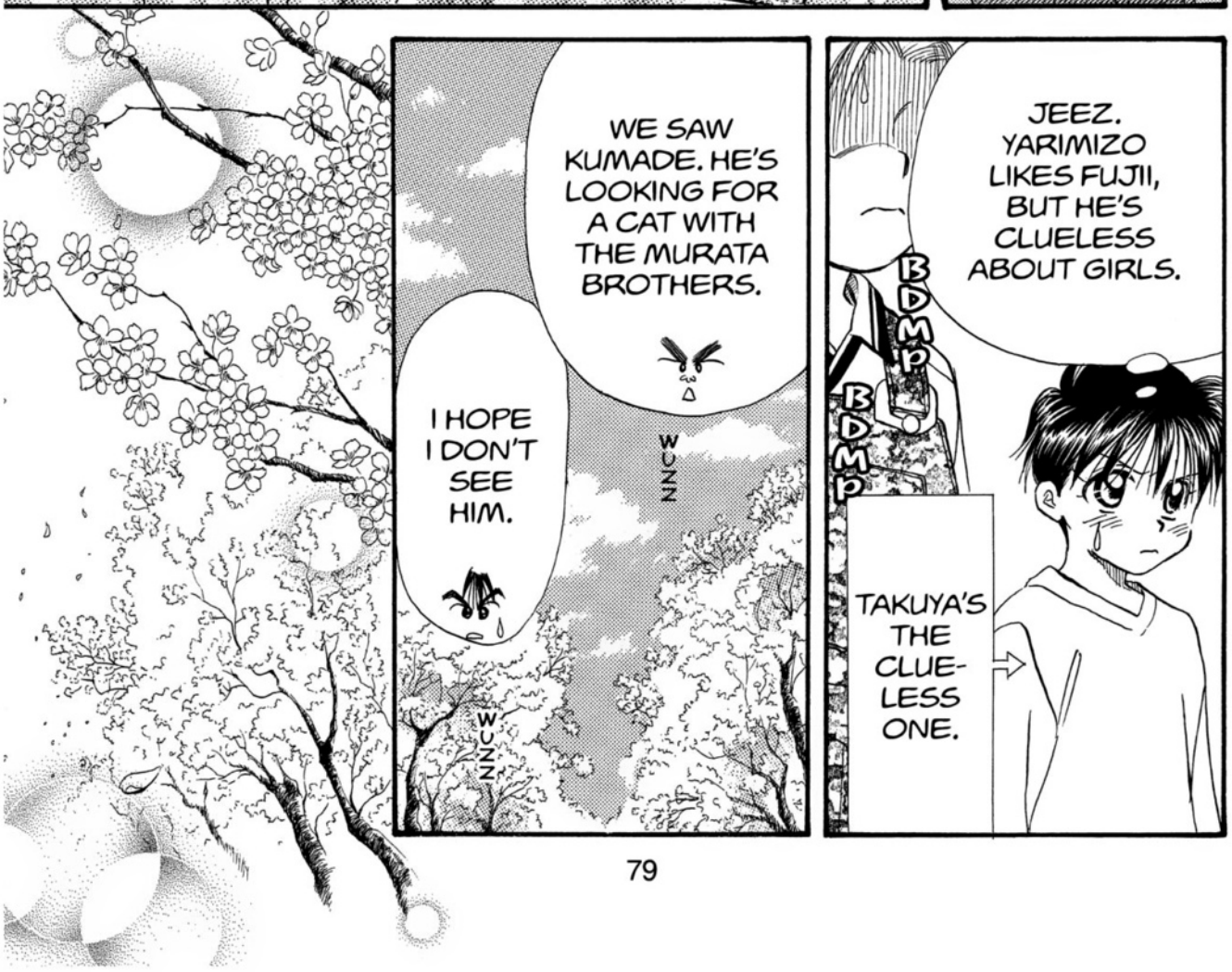

SHE'S DONE IT TO ME A FEW TIMES, BUT SHE MOSTLY DOES IT TO **YOU**, TAKUYA.
HUH? SHE DOES IT A LOT, RIGHT, GON?

...MAYBE YARIMIZO'S TRYING TO GET TAKUYA'S ATTENTION BECAUSE SHE **LIKES** HIM.
...OR...
HUH?


WAIT A MINUTE. DOES YARIMIZO HAVE A THING FOR TAKUYA?


...
CALM DOWN. I SAID MAYBE.
THAT'S NOT IT!
FUJII'S SHARP.


BDMP
BDMP
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO!
...BUT IF THE PERSON IS TAKUYA...
...THAT SORT OF PERSON, ISN'T HE?
ENO IS...
HE STOOD UP FOR YOU. LUCKY.
I'VE BEEN WONDERING IF THERE WAS SOMEONE YARIMIZO LIKED...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.


WE SAW KUMADE. HE'S LOOKING FOR A CAT WITH THE MURATA BROTHERS.
I HOPE I DON'T SEE HIM.
WUZZ
WUZZ
JEEZ. YARIMIZO LIKES FUJII, BUT HE'S CLUELESS ABOUT GIRLS.
BDMP
BDMP
TAKUYA'S THE CLUE-LESS ONE.

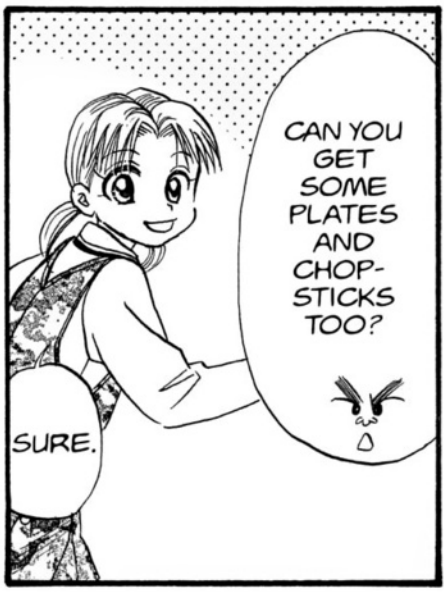
SHING
HEY! THEY'RE LEAVING!
BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR THAT SPOT.
LET'S BEAT THEM TO IT!
THERE!
GO!!
WHOOM
WHUMP
HMPH!
GOOD JOB!
WE GOT IT!
GRR!
TMP
YAY!

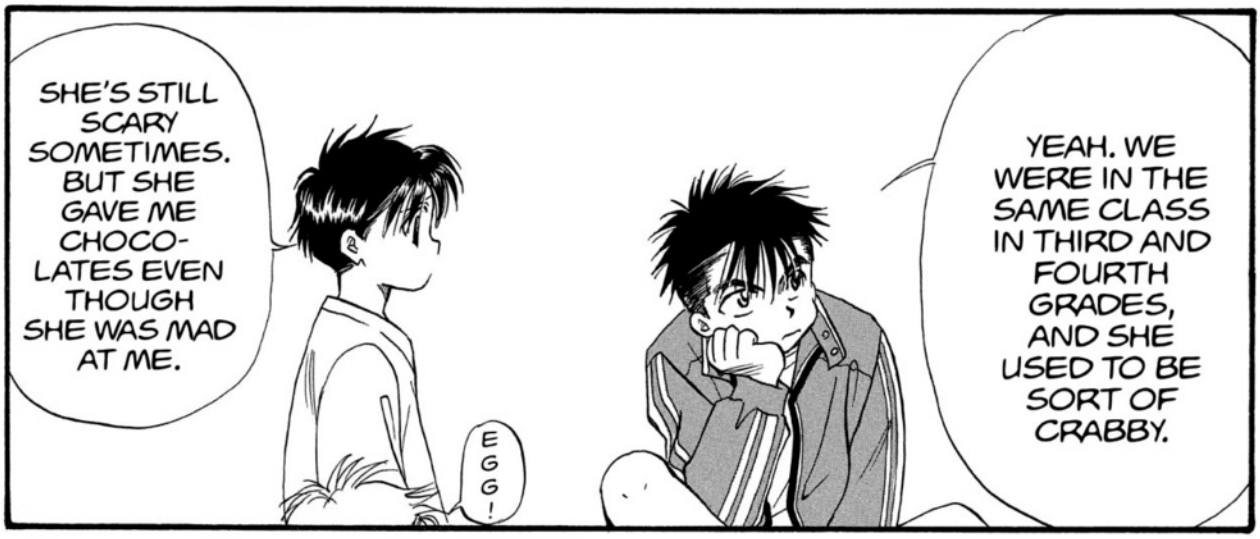
HELP YOUR-SELVES. I BROUGHT LOTS OF FOOD.
OH, A LUNCH BOX.
MY MOM AND HER FRIENDS AREN'T FAR FROM HERE. I'LL GO GET SOME FOOD FROM HER.

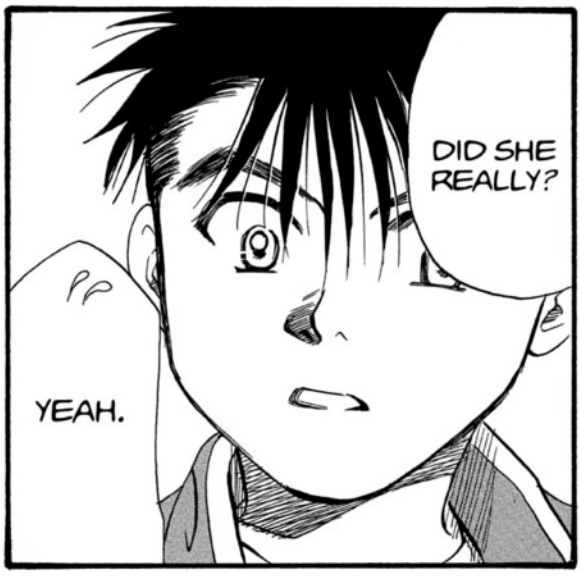
YOU LITTLE ...
SPEED IS YOUR ONLY TALENT, HUH, AKIHIRO?

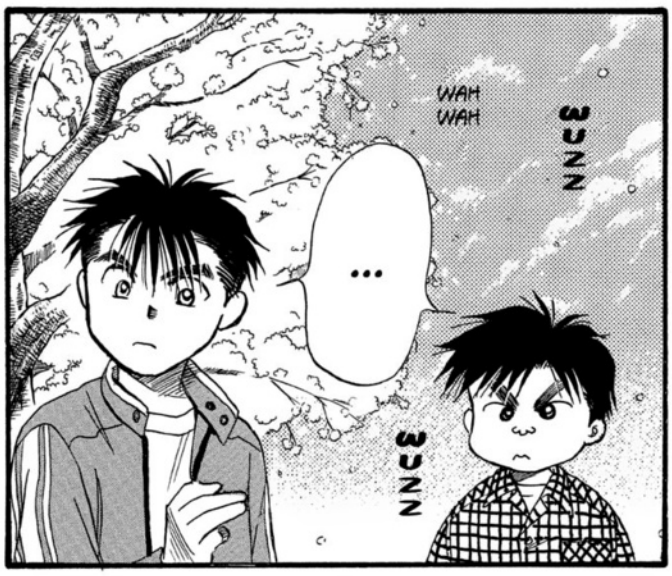
NO. SHE GOT BETTER AT THE START OF SIXTH GRADE.
HAS FUKAYA ALWAYS BEEN SO FRIENDLY?

...

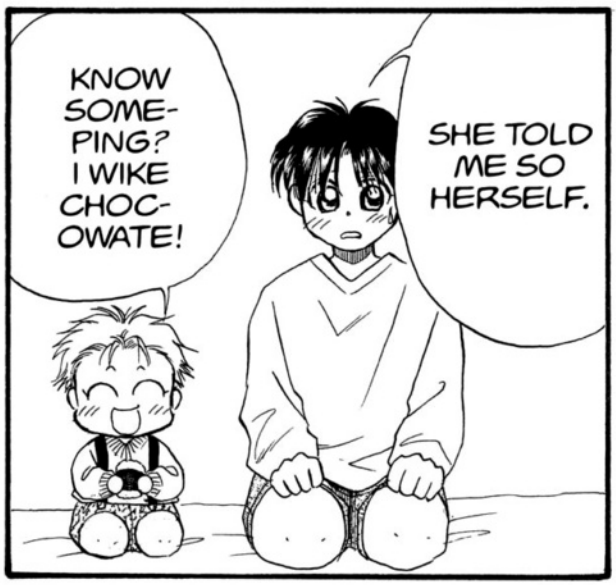

CAN YOU GET SOME PLATES AND CHOP-STICKS TOO?
SURE.


SHE'S STILL SCARY SOMETIMES. BUT SHE GAVE ME CHOCO-LATES EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS MAD AT ME.
EGG!
YEAH. WE WERE IN THE SAME CLASS IN THIRD AND FOURTH GRADES, AND SHE USED TO BE SORT OF CRABBY.


DID SHE REALLY?
YEAH.

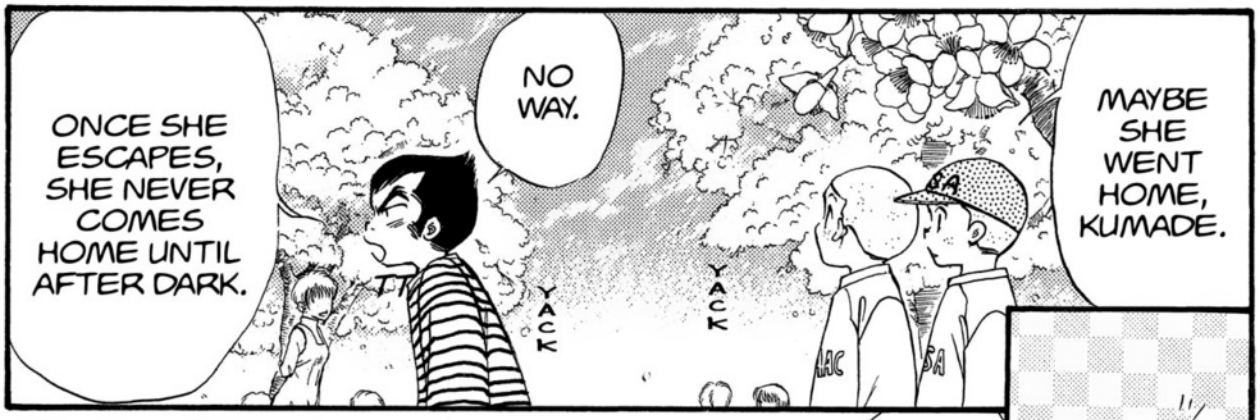

WAH WAH
...

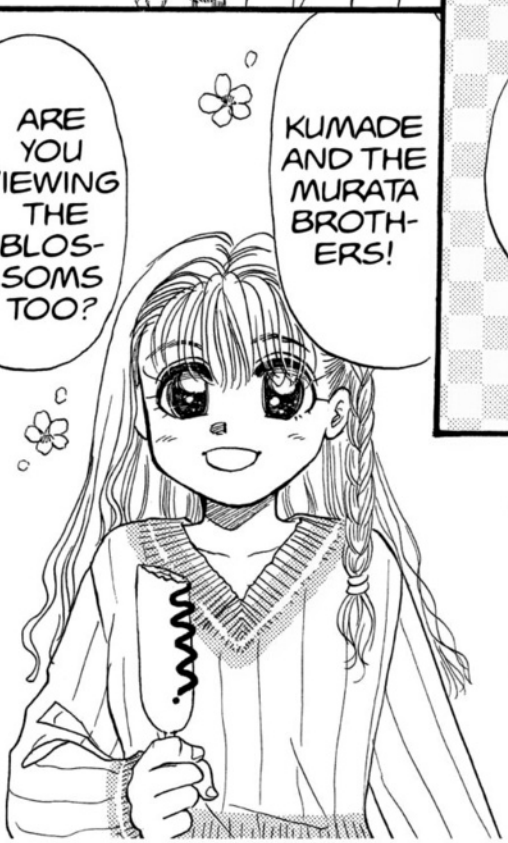
HMM...
SNAP


KNOW SOME-PING? I WIKE CHOC-OWATE!
SHE TOLD ME SO HERSELF.

I'M COMING TOO!
YEAH!

I'LL GO GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK. DOES EVERY-BODY LIKE OOLONG TEA?
YEAH.
I GO TOO!

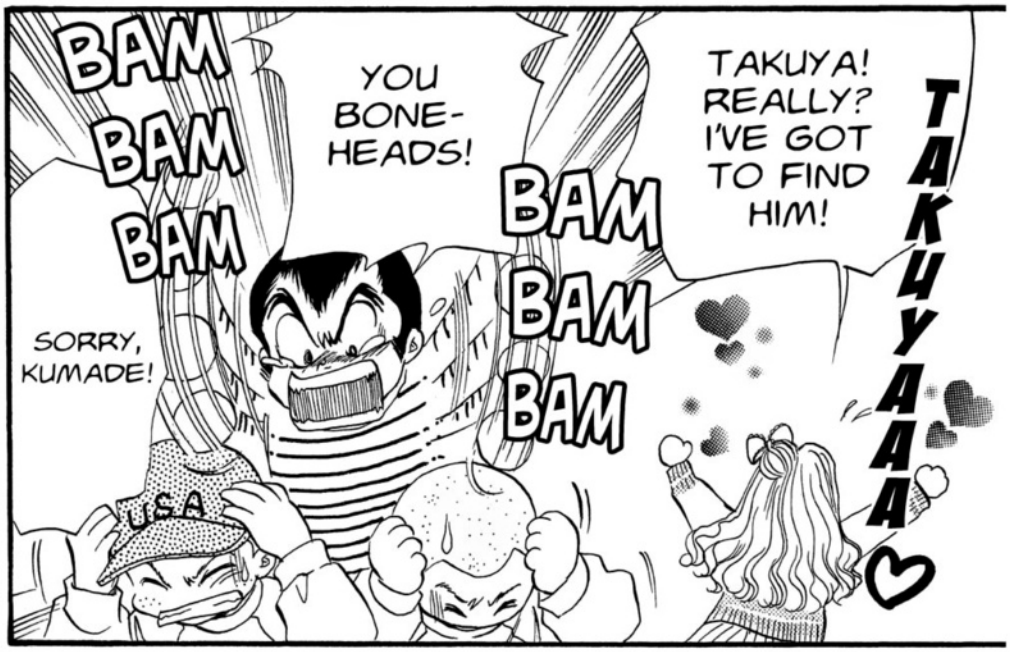


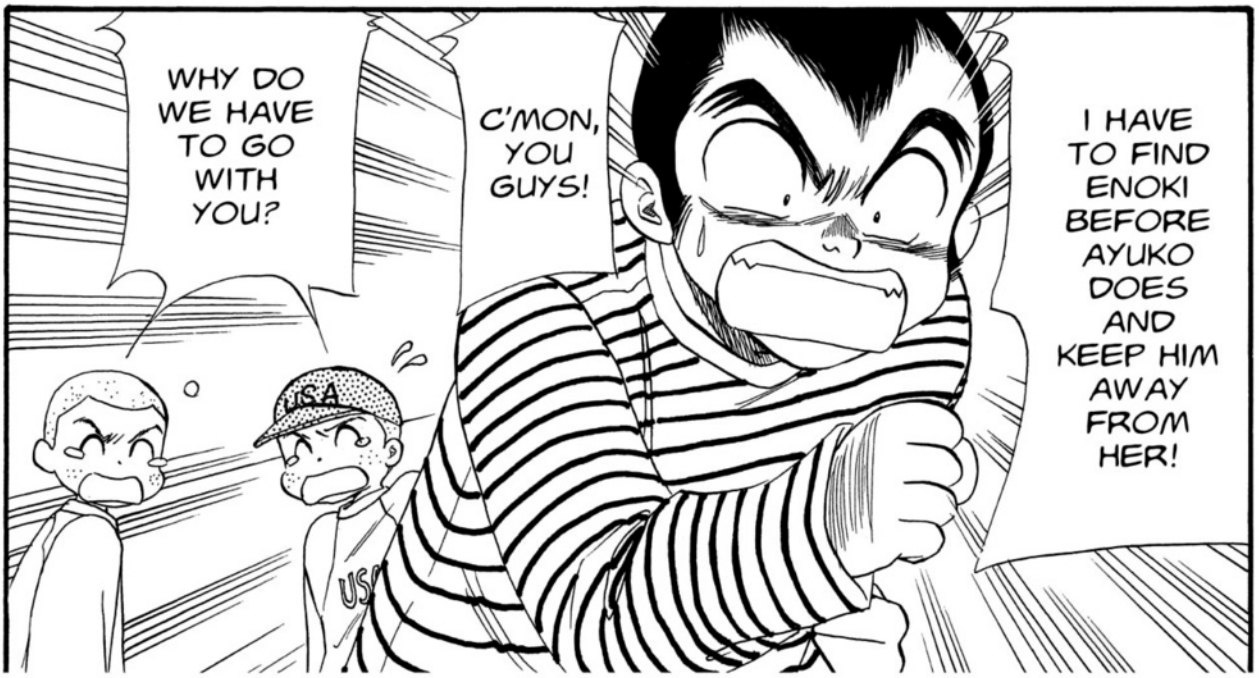


AYUKO NAKANISHI DATA: APPEARED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN VOLUME 2. SHE'S IN LOVE WITH TAKUYA.

COULD THIS BE FATE?
I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE YOU HERE!
A... AYUKO!
WE JUST SAW ENOKI AND HIS GANG.
U.S.A

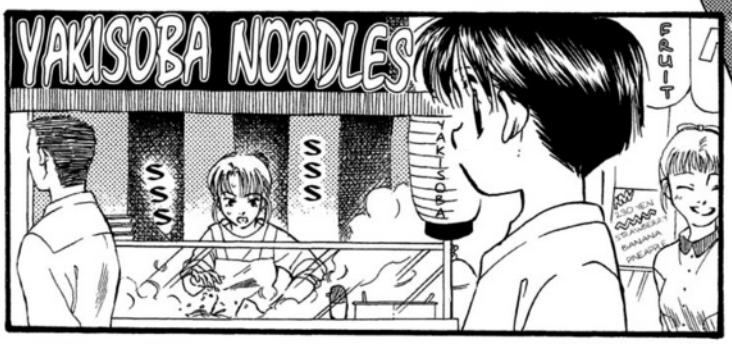
WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE TIME TO WASTE ON THAT STUPID CAT!
DOOM


BAM BAM BAM
YOU BONE-HEADS!
BAM BAM BAM
TAKUYA! REALLY? I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!
TAKUYAAA
SORRY, KUMADE!
U.S.A


WHY DO WE HAVE TO GO WITH YOU?
C'MON, YOU GUYS!
I HAVE TO FIND ENOKI BEFORE AYUKO DOES AND KEEP HIM AWAY FROM HER!
U.S.A

I HOPE THIS'LL BE ENOUGH.
BWAZA! WOOK! OBER DERE!

QUIT COM-PLAINING!!
WAAH
POTATO TEA


YAKISOBA NOODLES
SSS
SSS
YAKISOBA
EDIT

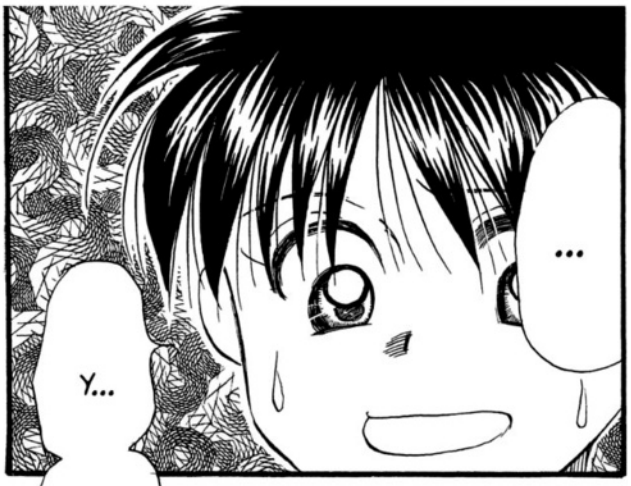
TMP TMP TMP TMP
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

DOOM
BWAZA!
HEWP!

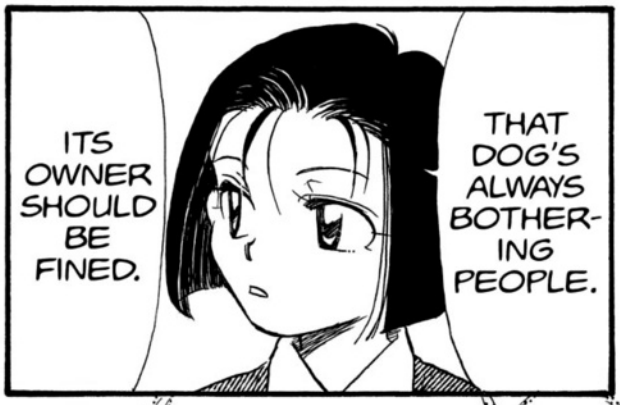
NO, MINORU. I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY.
I WANT SOME CORN.
PWEASE!
BWAZA!

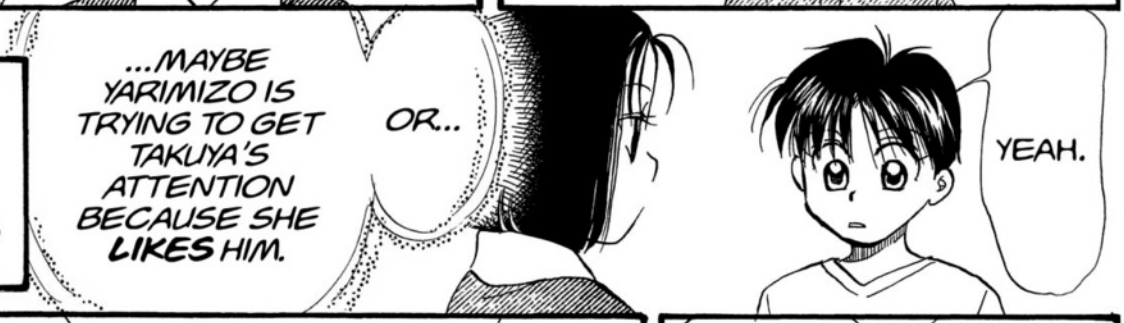
WOOF
HUFF HUFF
HUFF
I'VE MISSED YOU!
AAAAH
WHO
OM
WHAK
THUD

YIPPY
YOU'RE WELCOME.
UMM... THANKS.


...
Y...

YARI-MIZO?
YO.

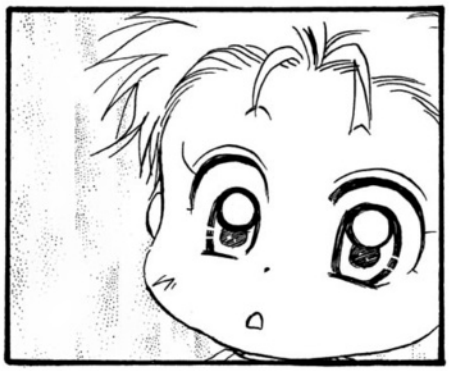

ITS OWNER SHOULD BE FINED.
THAT DOG'S ALWAYS BOTHER-ING PEOPLE.

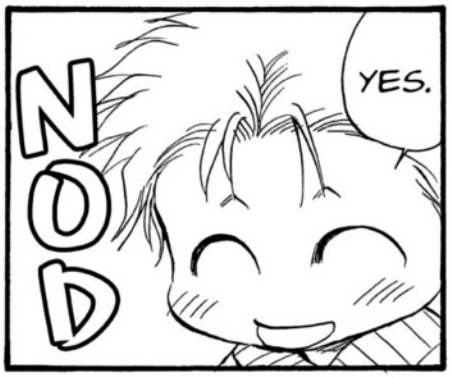

...MAYBE YARIMIZO IS TRYING TO GET TAKUYA'S ATTENTION BECAUSE SHE LIKES HIM.
OR..
YEAH.

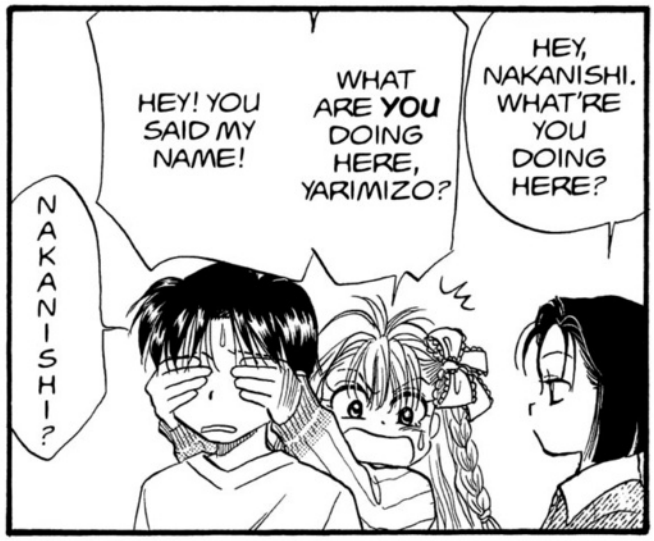
DO YOU LIKE STRONG WOMEN? WILL YOU MARRY ME SOMEDAY?
WOW!
AMAJING! YOU'S STWONG!

OH, A HUMAN FAN.
NO! THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!
WIP
WIP

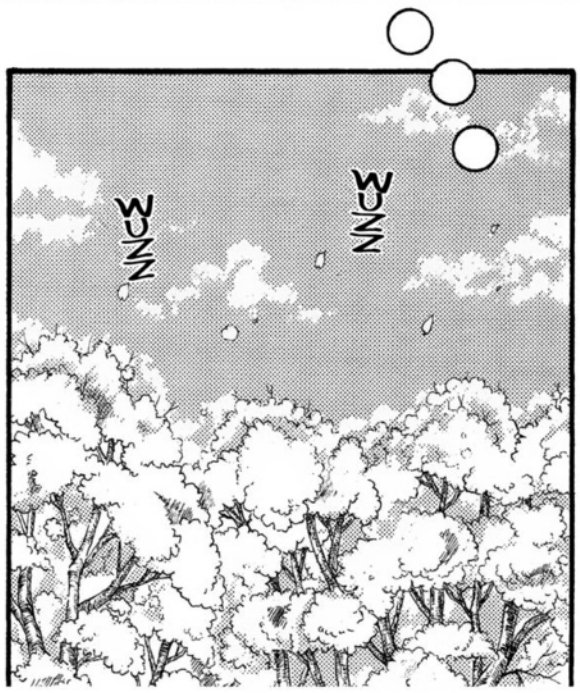
DON'T WORRY. I DON'T THINK HE UNDER-STOOD HER.
A RIVAL HAS APPEARED!
MINORU ...
ZANG
HUH?

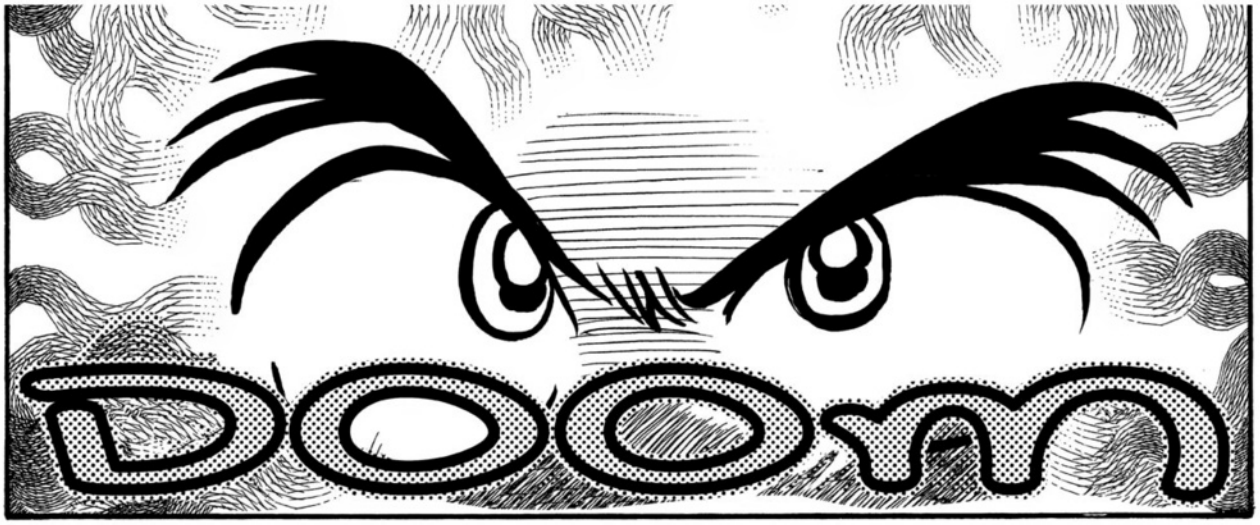


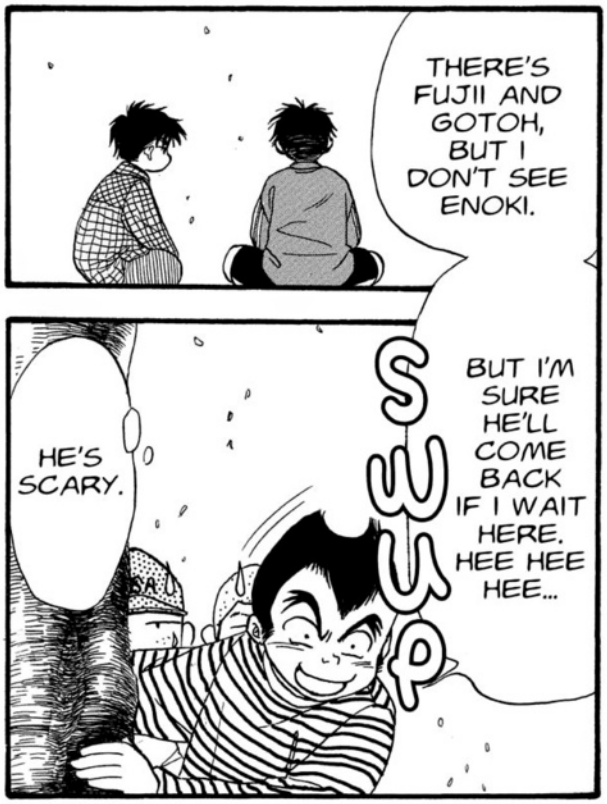

YES.
NOD


HEY, NAKANISHI. WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, YARIMIZO?
HEY! YOU SAID MY NAME!
NAKANISHI?

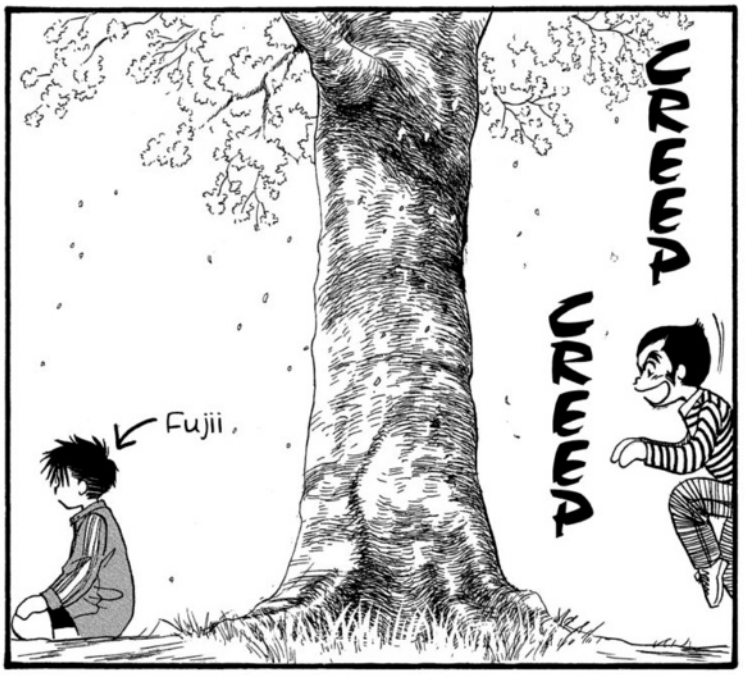
HEE HEE HEE...
SWP
FOUND YOU!! ♡
GUESS WHO!
HUH?
SWUFF


WUNN
WUNN


DOOM

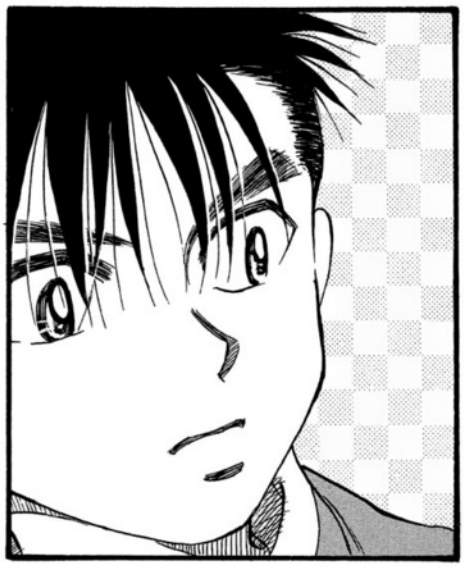

THERE'S FUJII AND GOTOH, BUT I DON'T SEE ENOKI.
BUT I'M SURE HE'LL COME BACK IF I WAIT HERE. HEE HEE HEE...
SWUP
HE'S SCARY.

SHEEN

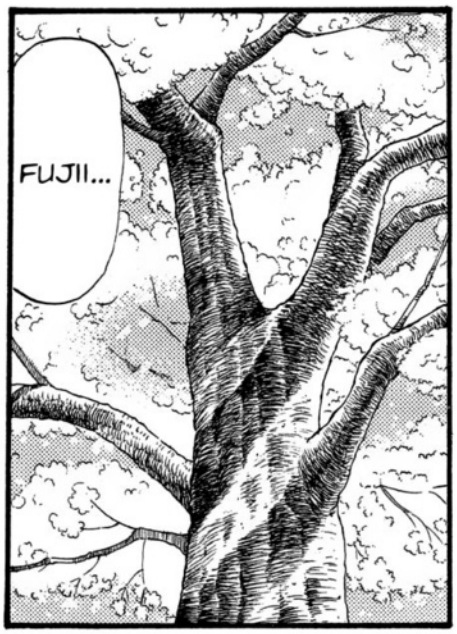

CREEP
CREEP
Fujii

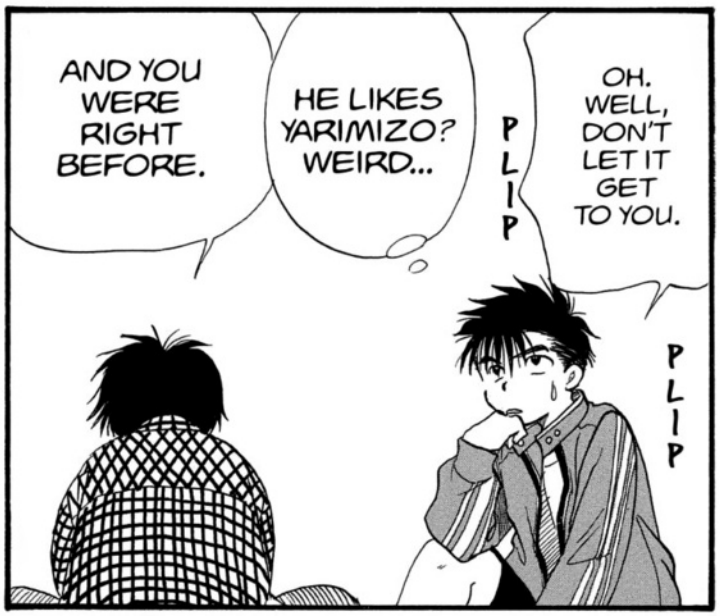
SWIP

PEEK



BUT DON'T TELL ANY-ONE.
...YARIMIZO REJECTED ME ONCE.
CHOMP


FUJII...


AND YOU WERE RIGHT BEFORE.
HE LIKES YARIMIZO? WEIRD...
PLIP
OH. WELL, DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU.
PLIP

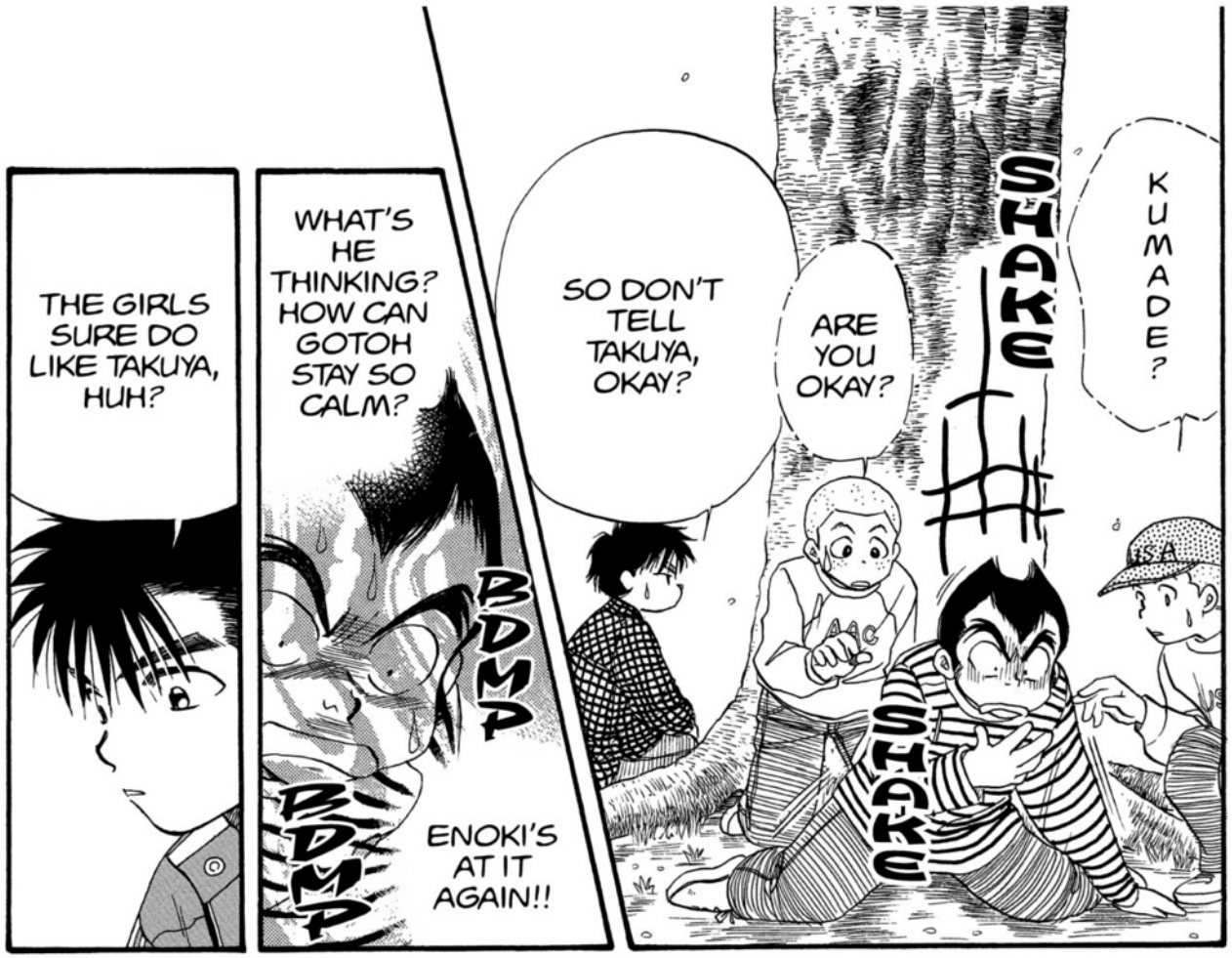
HOW PATHETIC! UNPOPU-LAR GUYS SURE HAVE IT ROUGH.

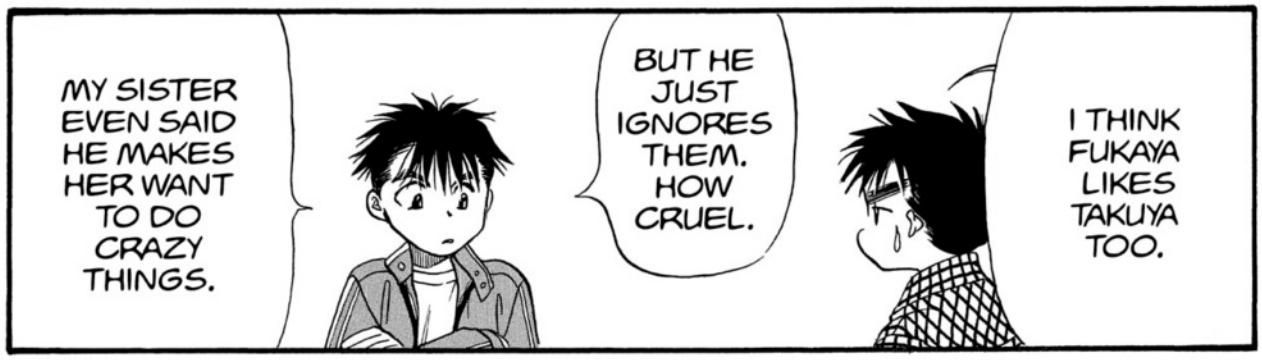
WHAT?

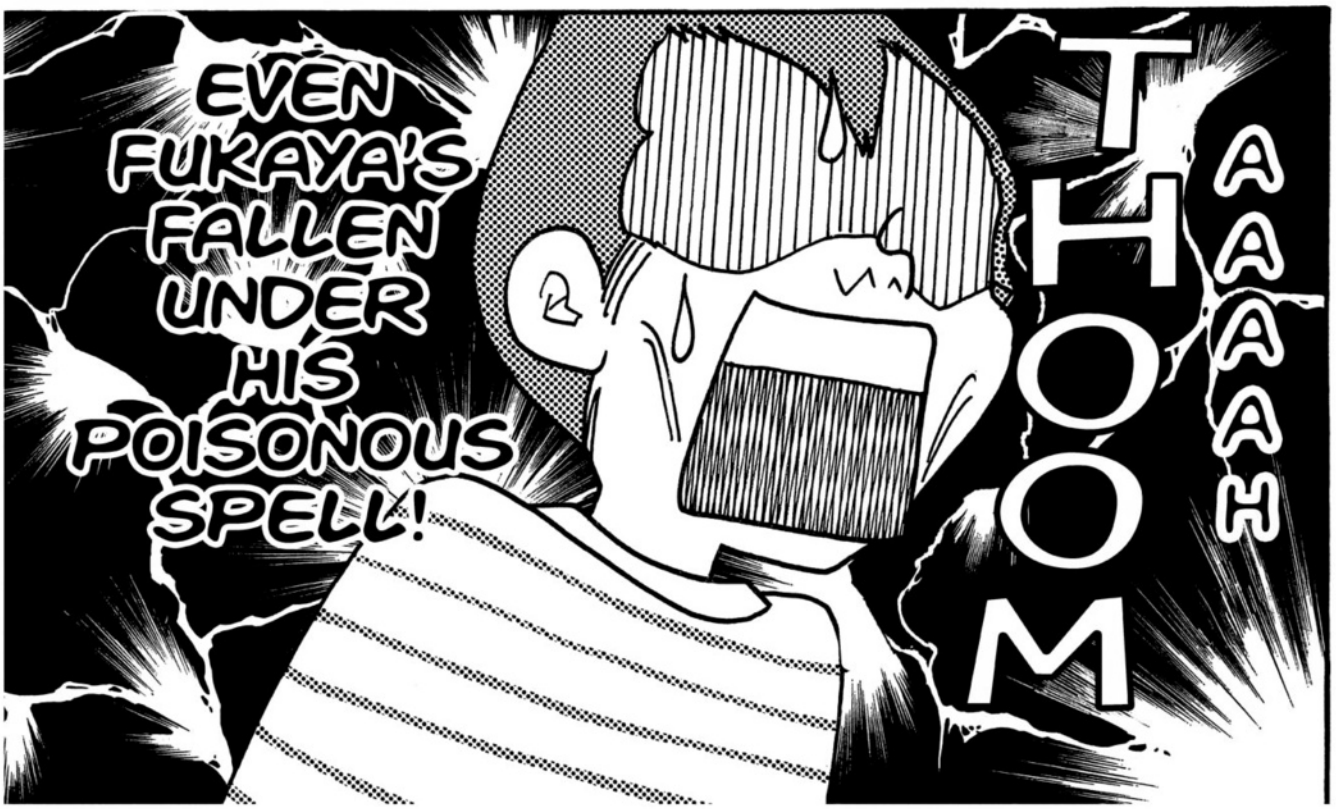
ZANG
WHAT?

WH...

HUH?
TAKUYA HASN'T NOTICED, BUT...
...YARIMIZO LIKES HIM. SIGH...


THE GIRLS SURE DO LIKE TAKUYA, HUH?
WHAT'S HE THINKING? HOW CAN GOTOH STAY SO CALM?
BDMP
BDMP
ENOKI'S AT IT AGAIN!!
SO DON'T TELL TAKUYA, OKAY?
ARE YOU OKAY?
SHAKE
SHAKE
KUMADE?


MY SISTER EVEN SAID HE MAKES HER WANT TO DO CRAZY THINGS.
BUT HE JUST IGNORES THEM. HOW CRUEL.
I THINK FUKAYA LIKES TAKUYA TOO.


EVEN FUKAYA'S FALLEN UNDER HIS POISONOUS SPELL!
THOOM
AAAAH

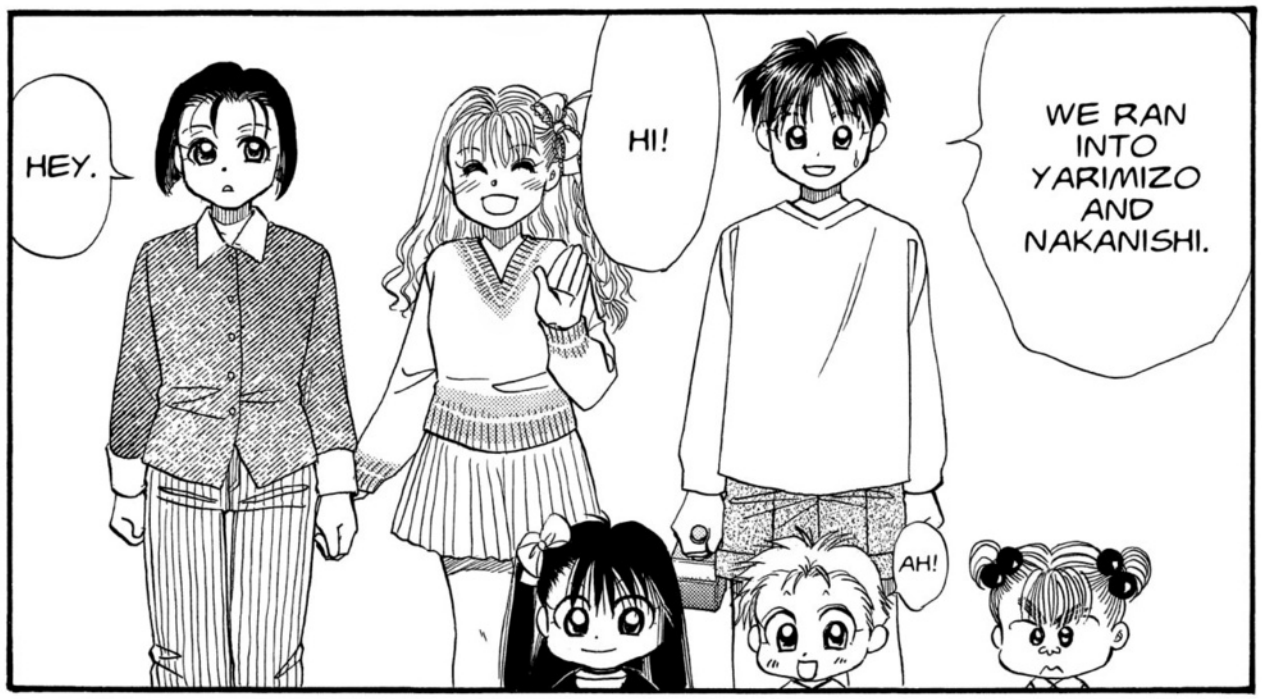
THEY WENT TO GET SOMETHING TO DRINK. THEY SHOULD BE BACK SOON.
WHERE ARE TAKUYA AND THE KIDS?

I'M BACK.

OH ...
HERE THEY COME NOW.

!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY? WHY IS ENOKI THE ONE THE GIRLS LIKE? HE'S LAME AND HIS LOOKS ARE TOTALLY AVERAGE! AND HE'S GOT THAT WEIRD BROTHER FETISH!
↑ "Fetish?"
SURE, HE'S PRETTY SMART AND GOOD AT SPORTS, BUT HE SUCKS AT ART! AND MORIGUCHI GOT A LOT MORE CHOCOLATES THAN HE DID ON VALENTINE'S DAY!
BANG
BANG
U.S.A

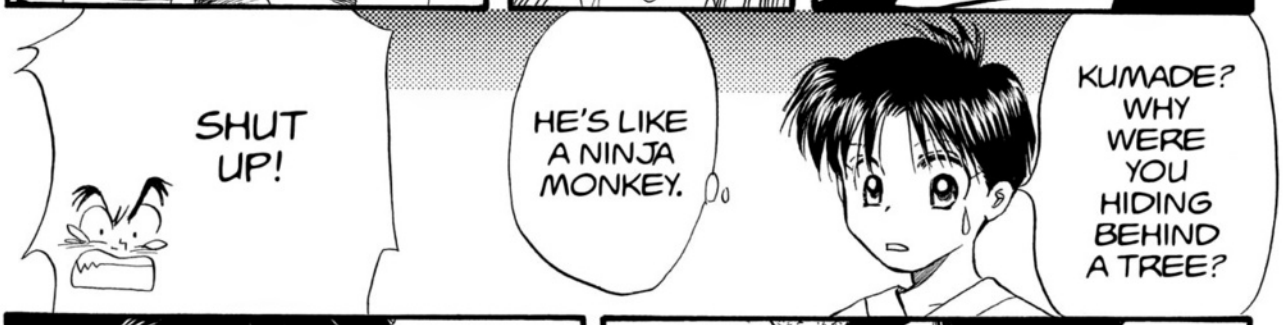

HEY.
HI!
WE RAN INTO YARIMIZO AND NAKANISHI.
AH!

TOO MANY PEOPLE.
IT'S LIKE THE WHOLE SCHOOL IS HERE.

ENOKI'S GOT HIS OWN HAREM!!
A... AYUKO...

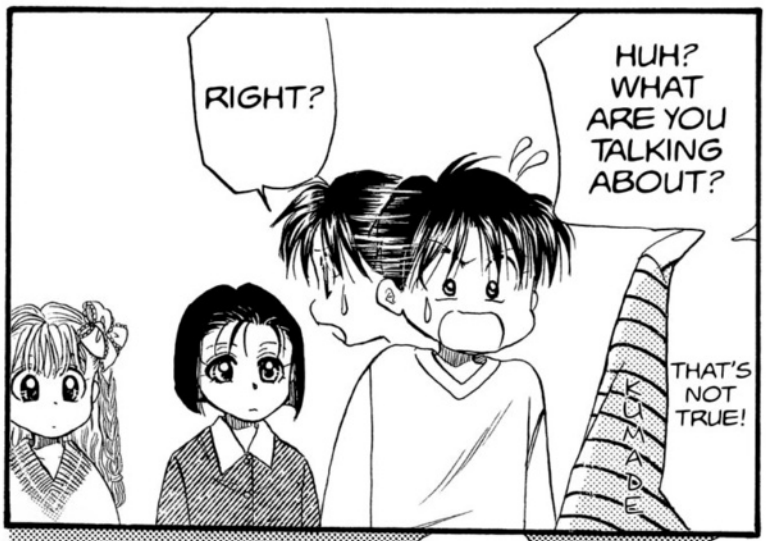
BRR
BRR

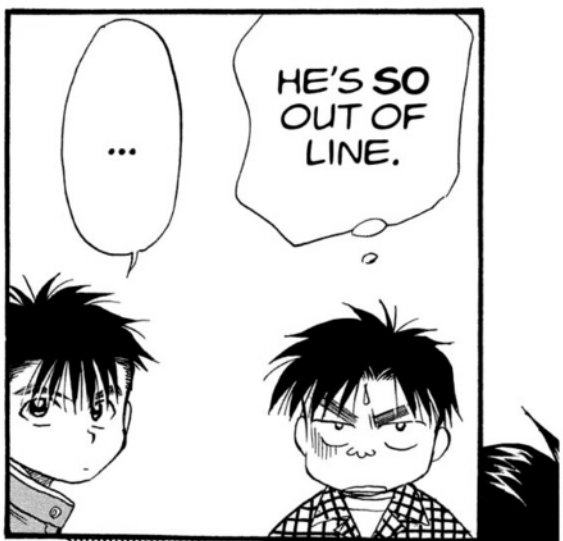
SHING
ENOKI!
HUH?


SHUT UP!
HE'S LIKE A NINJA MONKEY.
KUMADE? WHY WERE YOU HIDING BEHIND A TREE?

YOU EVEN DECEIVE YOUR OWN FRIENDS!
?

I CAN'T STAND YOU!
HA HA HA... YOU CON-CEITED CREEP.





Chapter 100 / The End

GALLERY OF COLOR SKETCHES ♡

THE FIRST COLOR PAGE OF THE FINAL CHAPTER, 1997.

FOR THE COVER OF *FLOWERS & DREAMS* MAGAZINE.

THE COVER OF *FLOWERS & DREAMS* WITH THE FINAL CHAPTER, 1997.

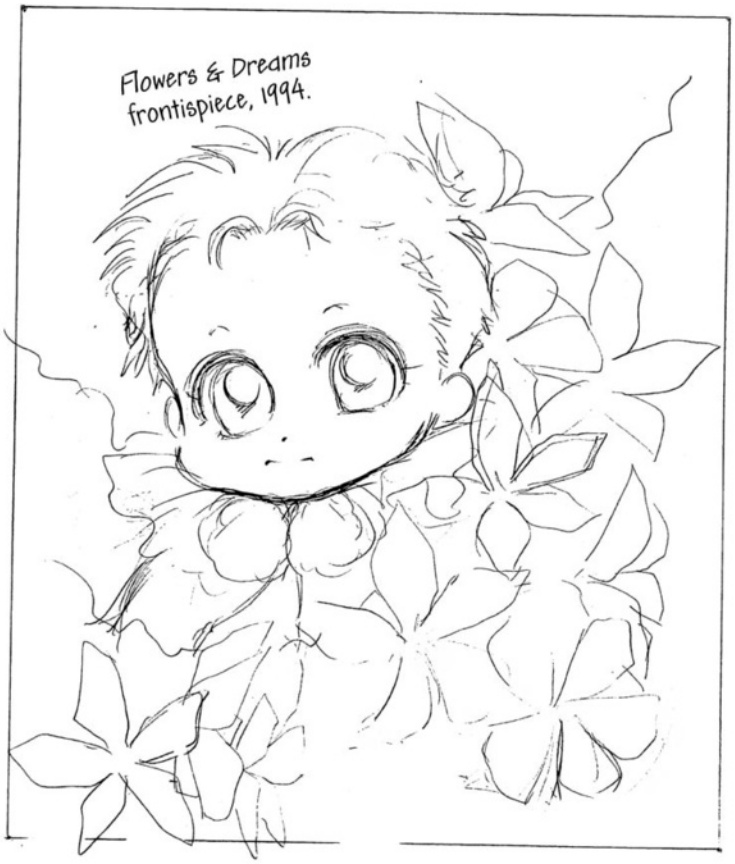
THE ILLUSTRATION FOR THE 1995 CALENDAR.

I DREW THIS IN PASTEL IN 1994.

HERE ARE FOUR VERSIONS OF MINORU, 1995.

BABY & Me

Chapter 101



The cover for a 1997 schedule book that came with Flowers & Dreams magazine.

I drew this in 1996.

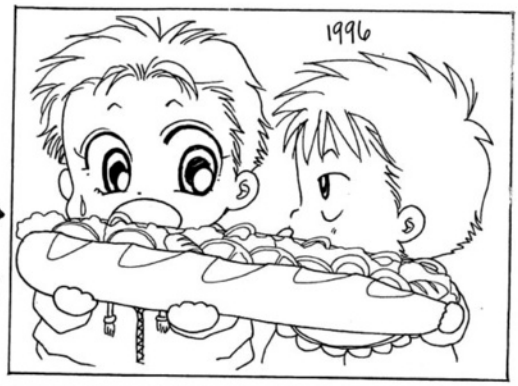
BONUS SKETCH GALLERY ♡

His big eyes get even bigger

And his awareness grows

As bits of data are input

And quickly absorbed.



Illustrations for Gift Bags.

Unpublished illustration. Rough drawing for the cover of *Flowers & Dreams*. It was rejected.

FWIP
MAYBE ALL THE GIRLS HERE LIKE YOU, BUT...
IT'S LIKE THIS.
THANKS TO KUMADE, I FOUND OUT THAT YARIMIZO AND FUKAYA BOTH LIKE ME. (I GUESS I ALREADY KNEW ABOUT AYUKO.)
...I HATE YOU!!
HUH?
UH-OH. THE SECRET'S OUT.
IS THAT TRUE?
I WAS IN SHOCK.
IS HE GONNA BE OKAY?
WIP
WIP
BWAZA! BWAZA!
SHAKE
SHAKE
WHAT?
BDMP
BDMP

DID I EVEN SAY GOOD-BYE?

All the people who were there that day.

...I DON'T REMEM-BER VERY MUCH.

ICHIKA FUJII GON HIRO MINORU

YARIMIZO FUKAYA AYUKO

AFTER THAT...

BDMP BDMP

UH...

TAKUYA, ARE YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?

OKAY.

UMF!

UMF!

YEAH.

I'M TAKING MINORU TO THE PLAY-GROUND. WE'LL BE BACK AROUND NOON.

IS SOMETHING WRONG?
TAKUYA WAS ACTING STRANGE LAST NIGHT.
Was working on a Saturday.
...
KLAK
KREEK
SEE YOU!
SEE YOU LATER!
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
I FEEL DIZZY.
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
YEAH ...
YARIMIZO SAYS THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE SHE LIKES.
I ALREADY LIKE SOMEBODY ELSE.

TAKUYA, DON'T EVER CHANGE.
DON'T TURN INTO A JERK, OKAY?
GON...
EDE-PHANT, EDE-PHANT...
COULD SHE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT ME?
I WAS SURE YARIMIZO LIKED FUJII.
AND FUKAYA ...
...ACTS LIKE SHE HATES ME.
DID HE KNOW?

WAS GON OKAY AFTER ...

... WHAT HAP-PENED YESTER-DAY?

BDMp

IF HE DIDN'T KNOW IT BEFORE, HE DOES NOW.

BDMp

WHAT'LL I DO?

BDMp

WOW ...

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

BDMp

GON...

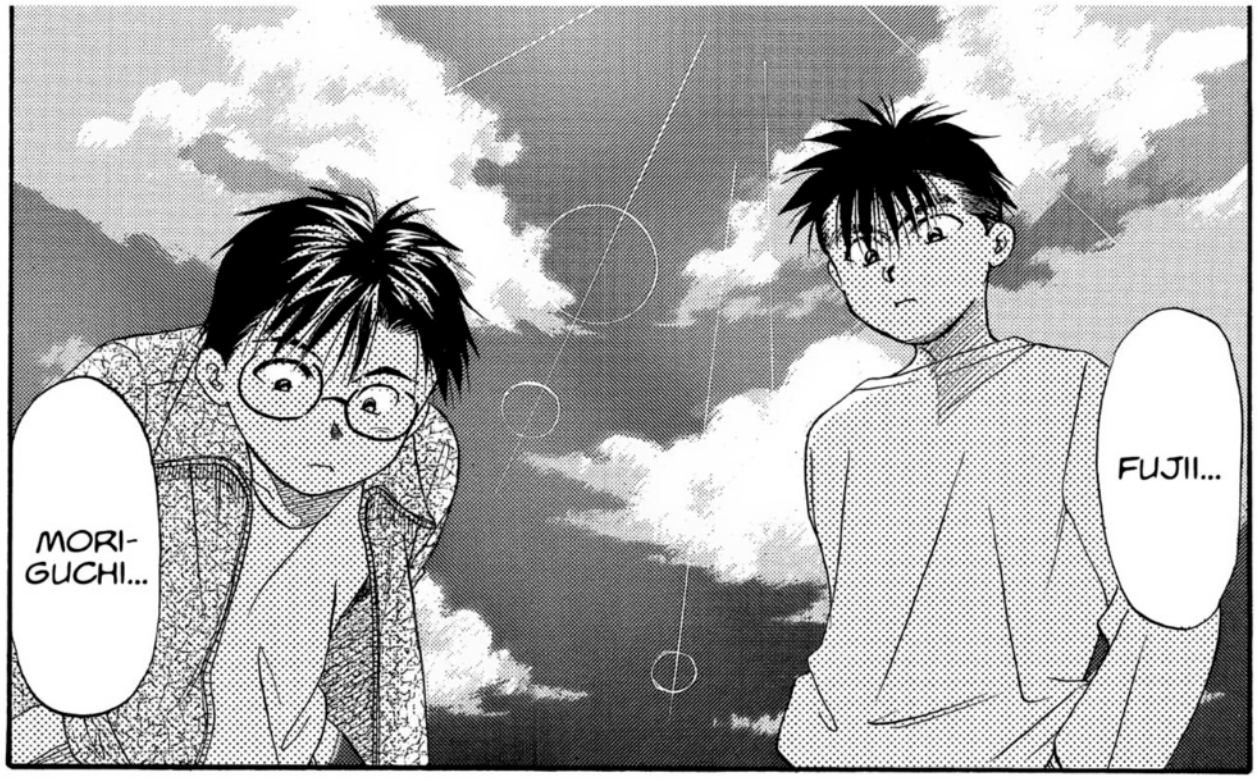
BDMp

GON...

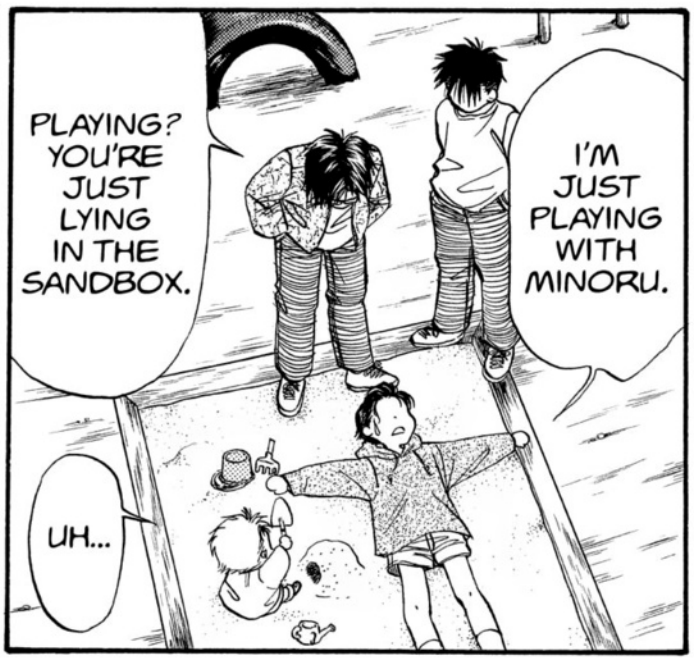
TAKUYA? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

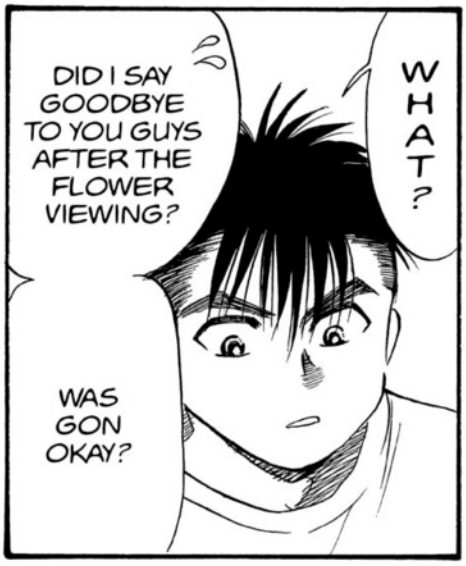
GON...

HUH?


MORI-GUCHI...
FUJII...

IT'S EVEN IN YOUR HAIR.
YOU'RE COVERED IN SAND.
SWF
SWF
WAP
WAP
WAP
...


PLAYING? YOU'RE JUST LYING IN THE SANDBOX.
I'M JUST PLAYING WITH MINORU.
UH...


DID I SAY GOODBYE TO YOU GUYS AFTER THE FLOWER VIEWING?
WHAT?
WAS GON OKAY?

HUH?
FUJII!
WHAT HAP-PENED YESTER-DAY? I CAN'T REALLY REMEM-BER.

WAP
WAP

Author's Note Part 4

I'm in trouble. I have nothing to write about. Let's see... I guess it's no secret that I'm a big fan of Tom Hanks. I haven't seen all of his films, but I've seen most of the famous ones. I guess *Splash* was the first. I saw it on TV.

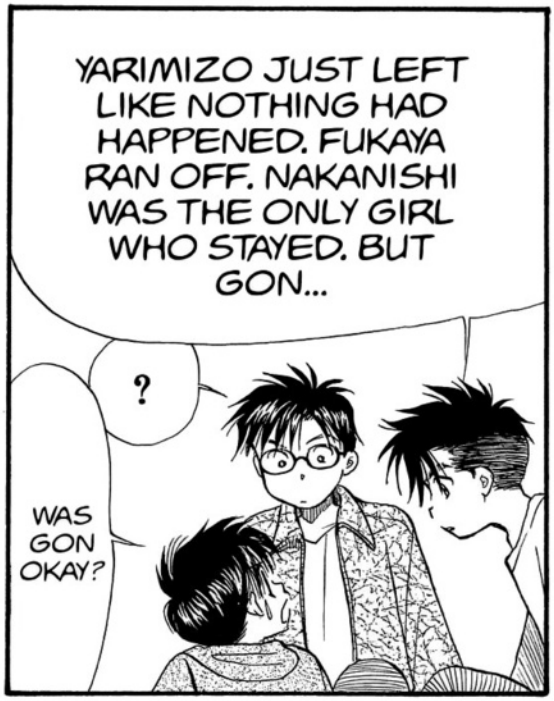
My Top 5 Tom Hanks movies:

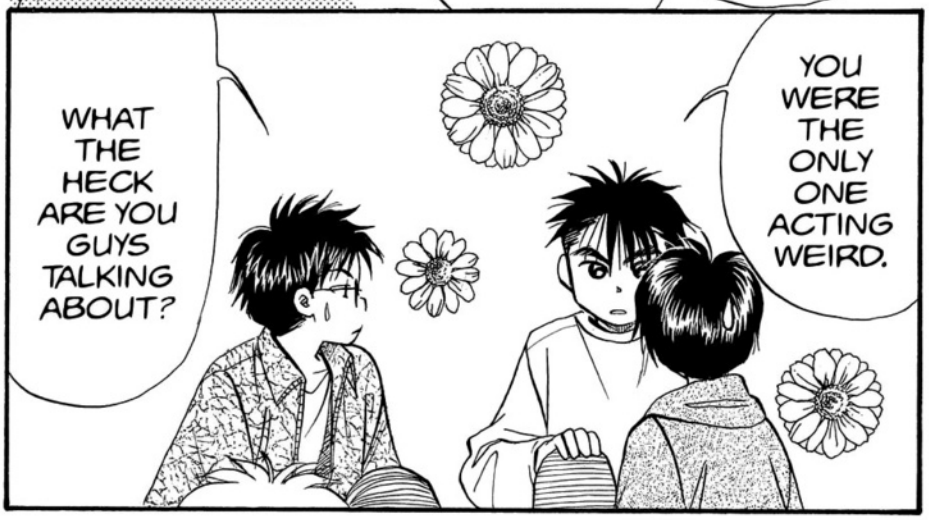
1. *Big*
2. *Philadelphia*
3. *Sleepless in Seattle*
4. *Forrest Gump*
5. *Splash*

(Looking at this list now, it's not that great.)

Some—like *Apollo 13*, *The Burbs* and *A League of Their Own*—aren't so good.

Tom Hanks is a middle-aged guy with a pug nose, a funny voice and curly hair. But his smile is so cute! ♡ And he's a great actor too!



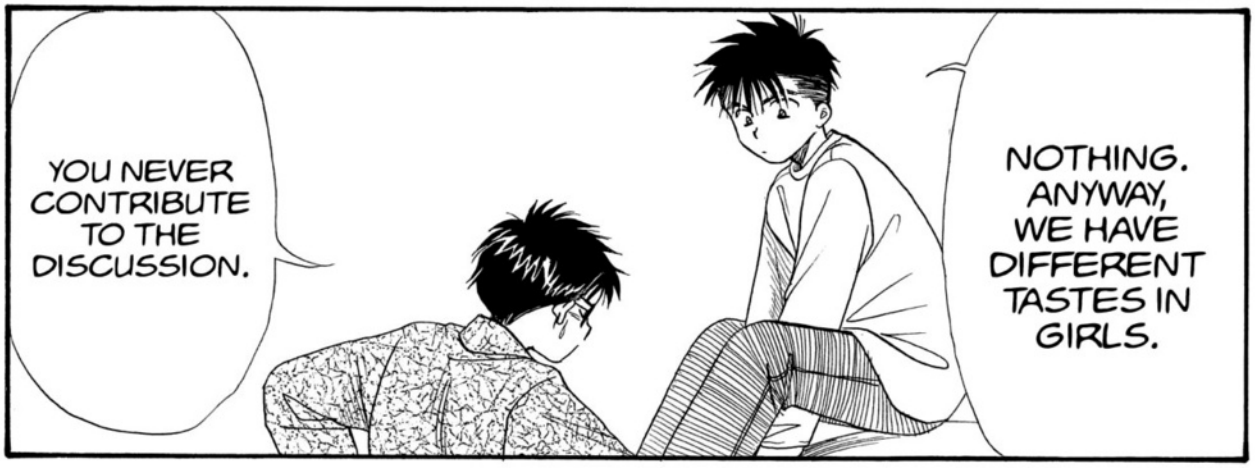


HMM... I SEE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

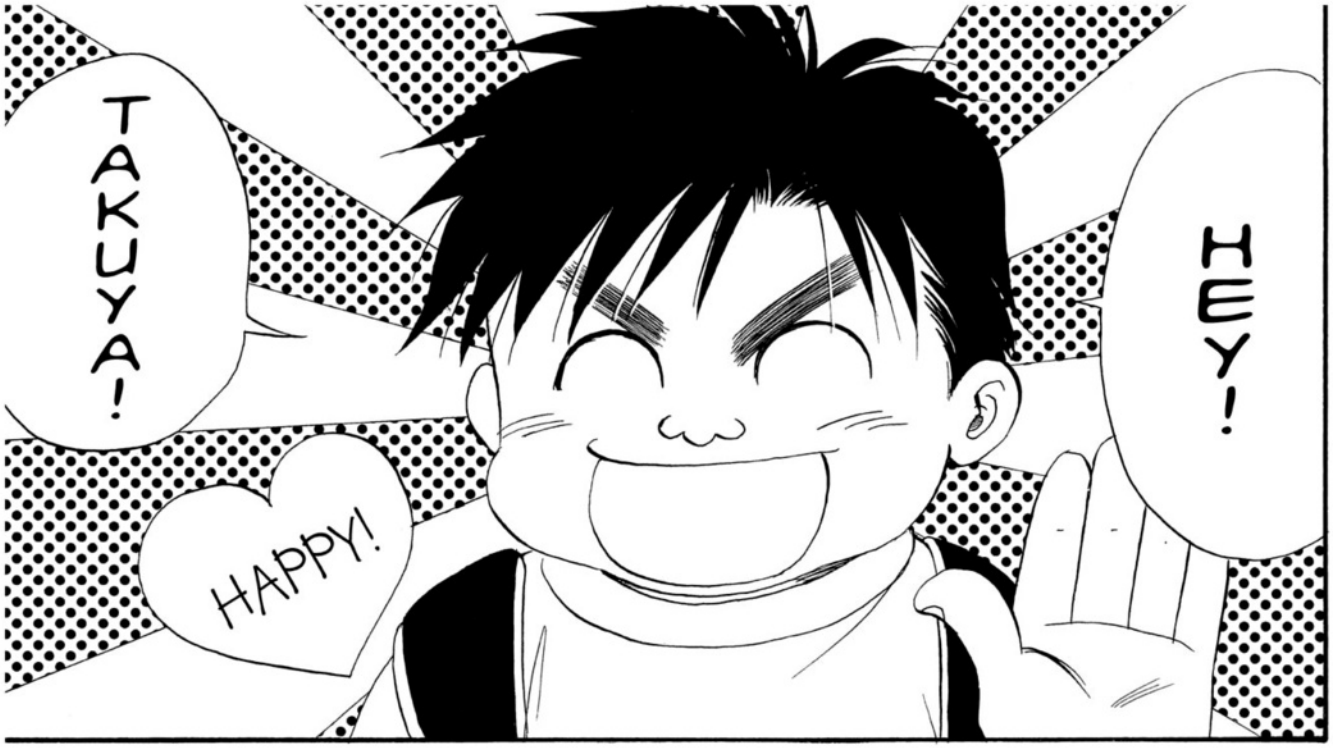
I MEAN ...
IF A GIRL I LIKED **LIKED YOU**, WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT IT?

WHEN KUMADE AND TAMADATE HEAR ABOUT THIS, THEY'LL GO CRAZY.
IT'S ROUGH WHEN SOMEBODY YOUR FRIEND LIKES HAS A CRUSH ON **YOU**.
BUT MAYBE YARIMIZO WAS JUST KIDDING. SHE ACTED LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.


YOU NEVER CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISCUSSION.
NOTHING. ANYWAY, WE HAVE DIFFERENT TASTES IN GIRLS.

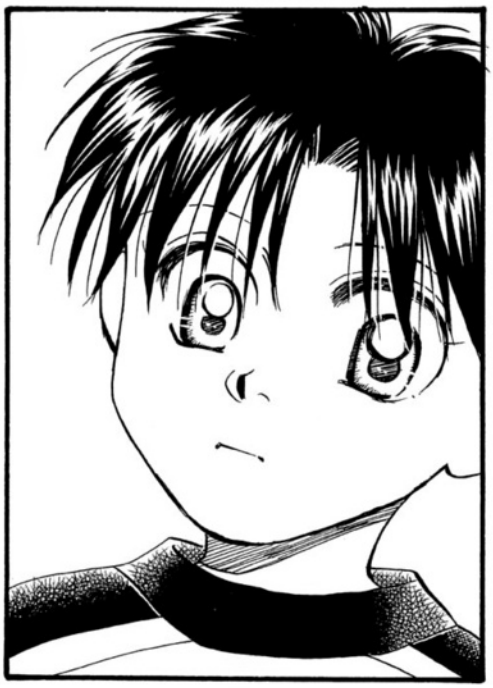
SHE'S ALWAYS COMMENTING ON SEEING FUJII AND ME TOGETHER.
SHE WAS LOOKING AT **YOU**, ENOKI, NOT ME.
Duh.
YEAH. IT MUST'VE BEEN HARD FOR GON TO HEAR ABOUT IT FROM KUMADE.
I WAS SURE YARIMIZO LIKED FUJII.
BUT ENOKI'S PROBLEM RIGHT NOW ISN'T FUKAYA OR YARIMIZO. IT'S GON.
I WONDER IF GON...
...KNEW THAT YARIMIZO LIKED ME.
I THINK **YOU'RE** THE ONE WHO'S UPSET ABOUT IT, NOT GON.
I KNOW YOU'RE CONFUSED RIGHT NOW, BUT JUST TRY TO PUT IT OUT OF YOUR MIND.
YEAH...
...

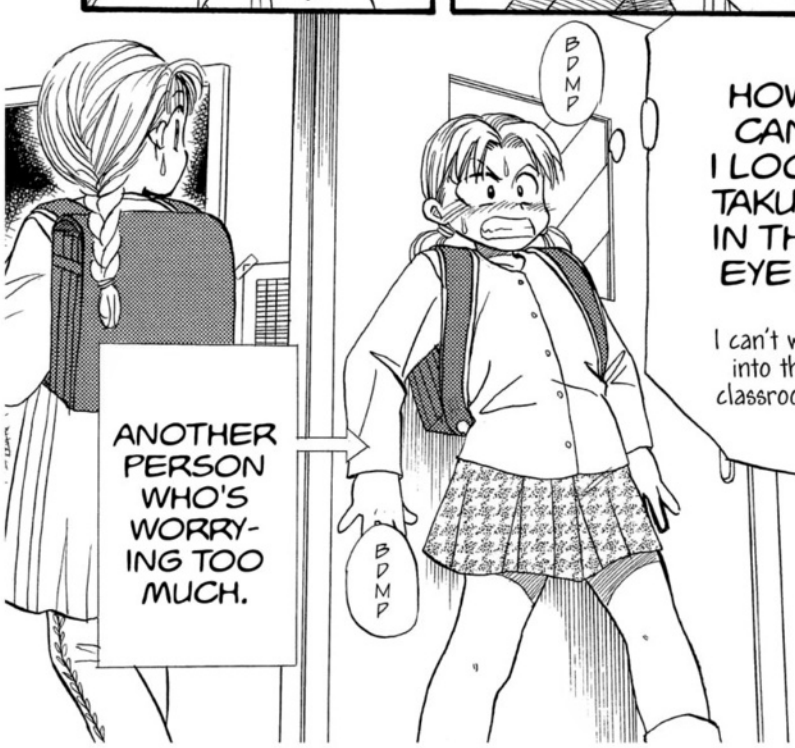
AN EDE-PHANT!
BWAZA! BWAZA!
HIS HAIR LOOKS LIKE DEVIL HORNS.
MAN, KUMADE IS SUCH A JERK.
Maybe his cat is his demon minion.
...
POUR-ING SAND?
I THINK TAKUYA CARES MORE ABOUT HIS LITTLE BROTHER THAN HE DOES ABOUT GIRLS RIGHT NOW.
AH... ♡
KSHHH
SAND
YACK
YACK
THE NEXT DAY...
TADASHI! STOP READING THOSE MAGAZINES AND HELP US WITH THE STORE!
HEE HEE HEE
HA HA HA HA
MEAN-WHILE ...


HEY!
TAKUYA!
HAPPY!

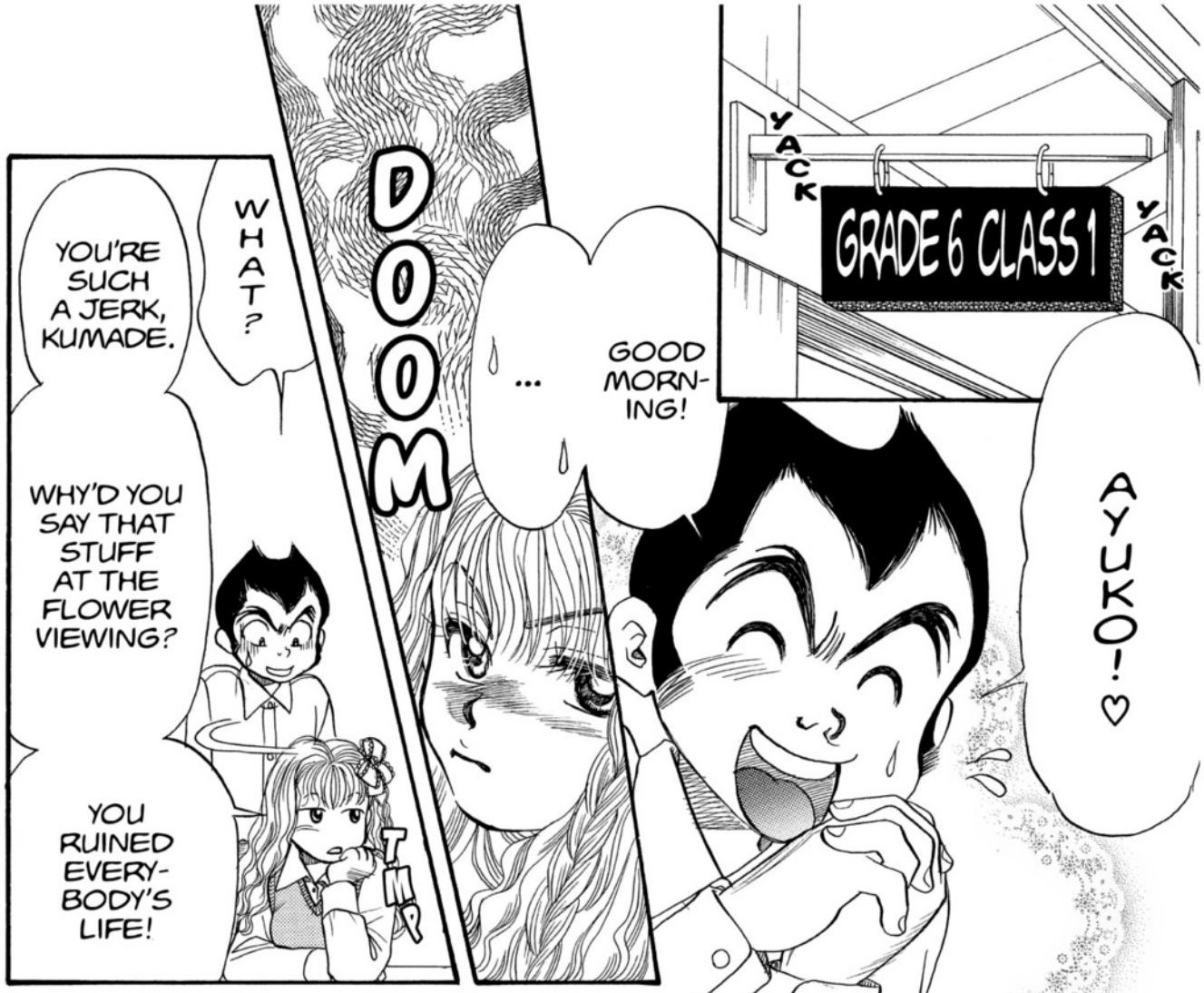
I SHOULD JUST ACT NORMAL.
MAYBE I'M WORRYING TOO MUCH.
SKRITCH

GOOD MORNING.
HEH HEH... YAKISOBA NOODLES FOR LUNCH TODAY, RIGHT? ♡
YACK
YACK




ANOTHER PERSON WHO'S WORRYING TOO MUCH.
BDMP
BDMP

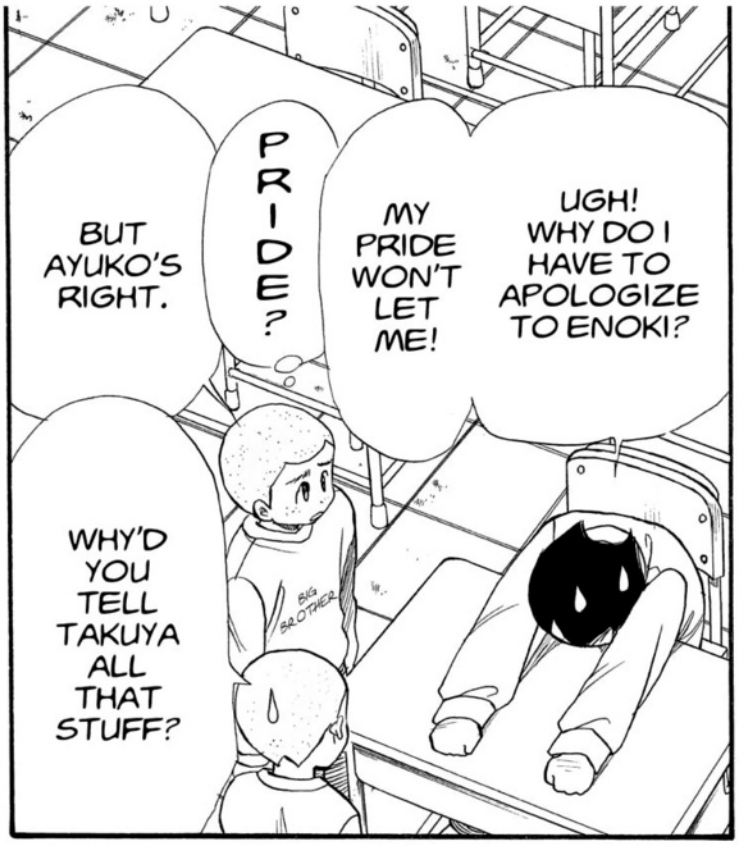
HOW CAN I LOOK TAKUYA IN THE EYE?!
I can't walk into the classroom!
YACK
BDMP
YACK
BDMP

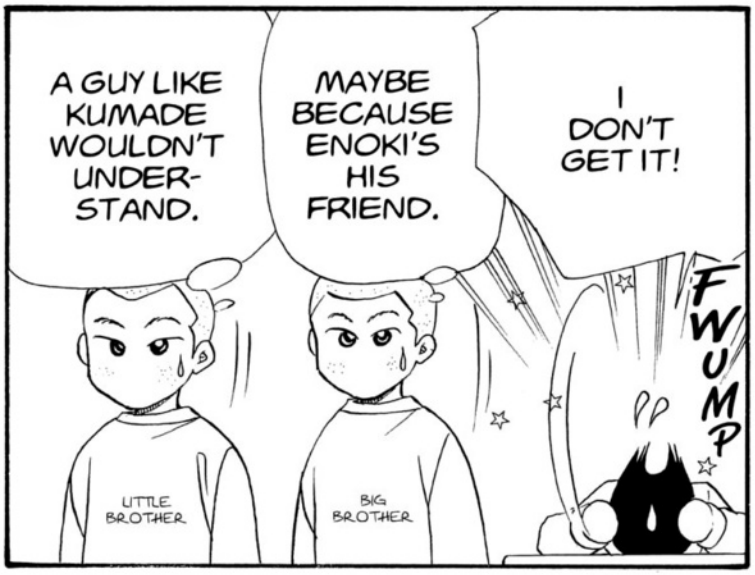

YACK
GRADE 6 CLASS 1
YACK
AYUKO!♡
...
GOOD MORNING!
DOOM
WHAT?
YOU'RE SUCH A JERK, KUMADE.
WHY'D YOU SAY THAT STUFF AT THE FLOWER VIEWING?
YOU RUINED EVERYBODY'S LIFE!
TMP

POOR YARIMIZO AND FUKAYA! THEY MUST BE SO EMBARRASSED! YOU ANNOUNCED THEIR SECRET LOVES TO THE WHOLE WORLD!
I CAN'T STAND GUYS WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND A WOMAN'S FEELINGS.
Thorns
'CAUSE... ER... I DUNNO...

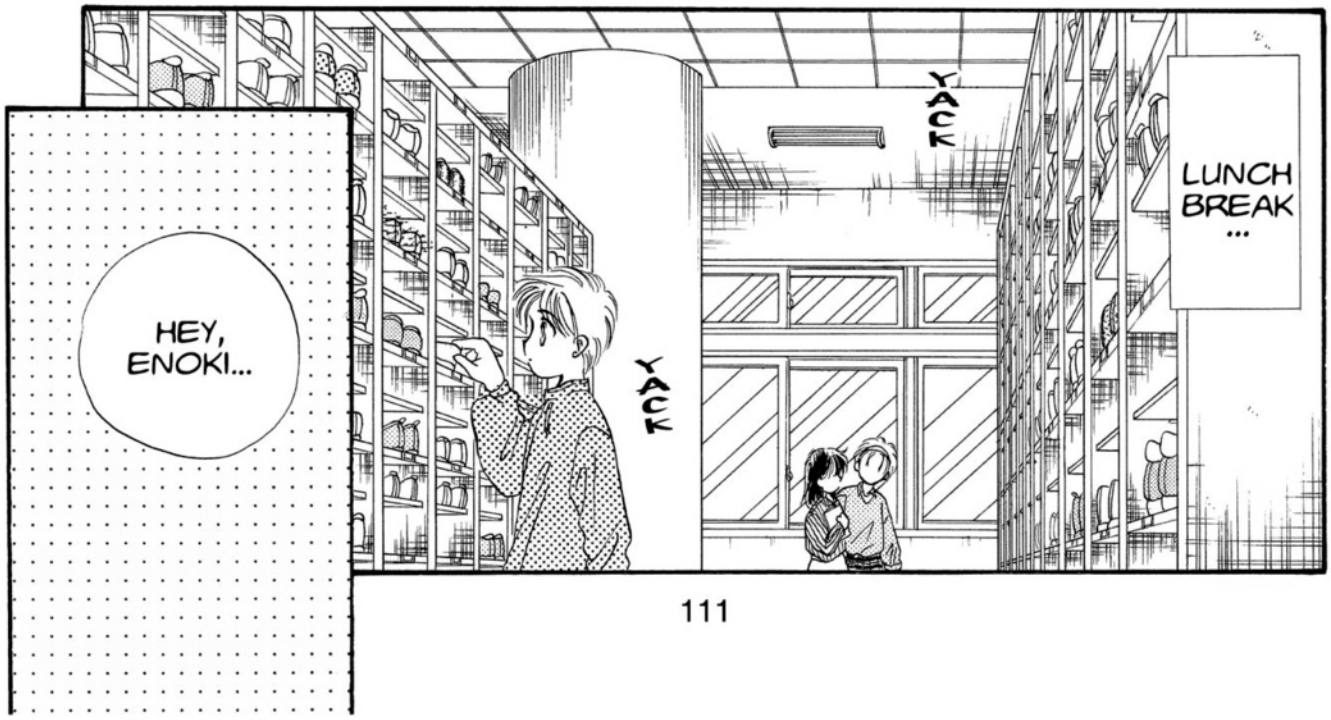
GIRL POWER IS AMAZING.
SHUNK
NOW GO AWAY!
ANYBODY WHO HURTS TAKUYA IS MY ENEMY! I WON'T FORGIVE YOU UNLESS YOU APOLOGIZE TO HIM!
AND YOU EVEN TRIED TO TURN GON AGAINST TAKUYA!
ZANG
ZANG
ZANG
U.S.A.

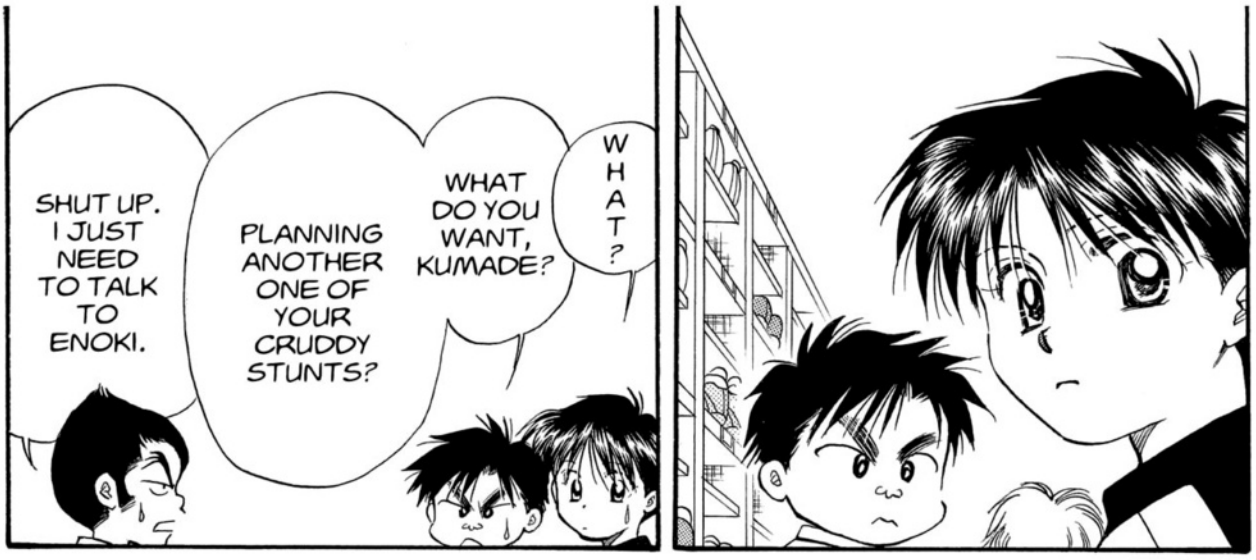
YOU MEAN BECAUSE THE GIRL GON LOVES HAS A CRUSH ON HIS BEST FRIEND?
BUT GON'S THE ONE WHO GOT HIS HOPES CRUSHED! WHY DO I HAFTA APOLOGIZE TO ENOKI?
GASP
WHUP
LITTLE BROTHER
BIG BROTHER


BUT AYUKO'S RIGHT.
PRIDE?
MY PRIDE WON'T LET ME!
UGH! WHY DO I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO ENOKI?
WHY'D YOU TELL TAKUYA ALL THAT STUFF?
BIG BROTHER


A GUY LIKE KUMADE WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.
MAYBE BECAUSE ENOKI'S HIS FRIEND.
I DON'T GET IT!
FWUMP
LITTLE BROTHER
BIG BROTHER

I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT BEFORE!
WHY DIDN'T GON SAY SOME-THING?

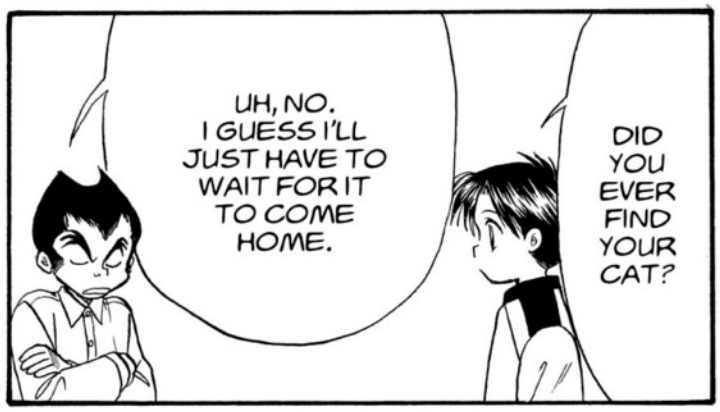

LUNCH BREAK ...
YACK
YACK
HEY, ENOKI...

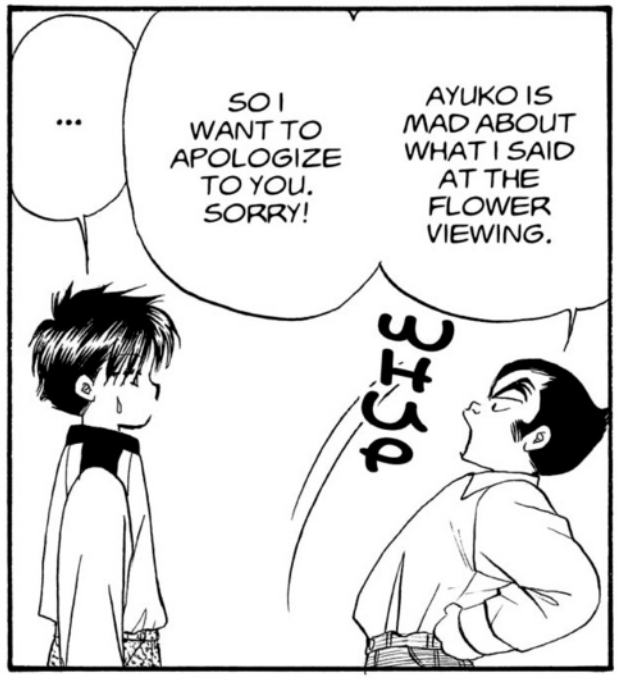

WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU WANT, KUMADE?
PLANNING ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR CRUDDY STUNTS?
SHUT UP. I JUST NEED TO TALK TO ENOKI.

UM... ABOUT THE OTHER DAY...

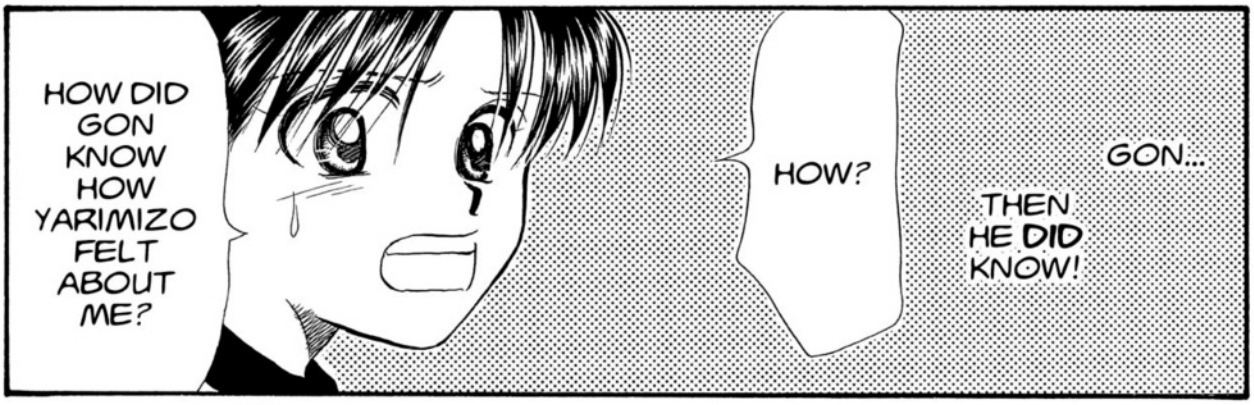
WELL?

GO ON AHEAD, GON.
BE CAREFUL, OKAY? HE'S THE GOD OF PLAGUES.
HOW MEAN!

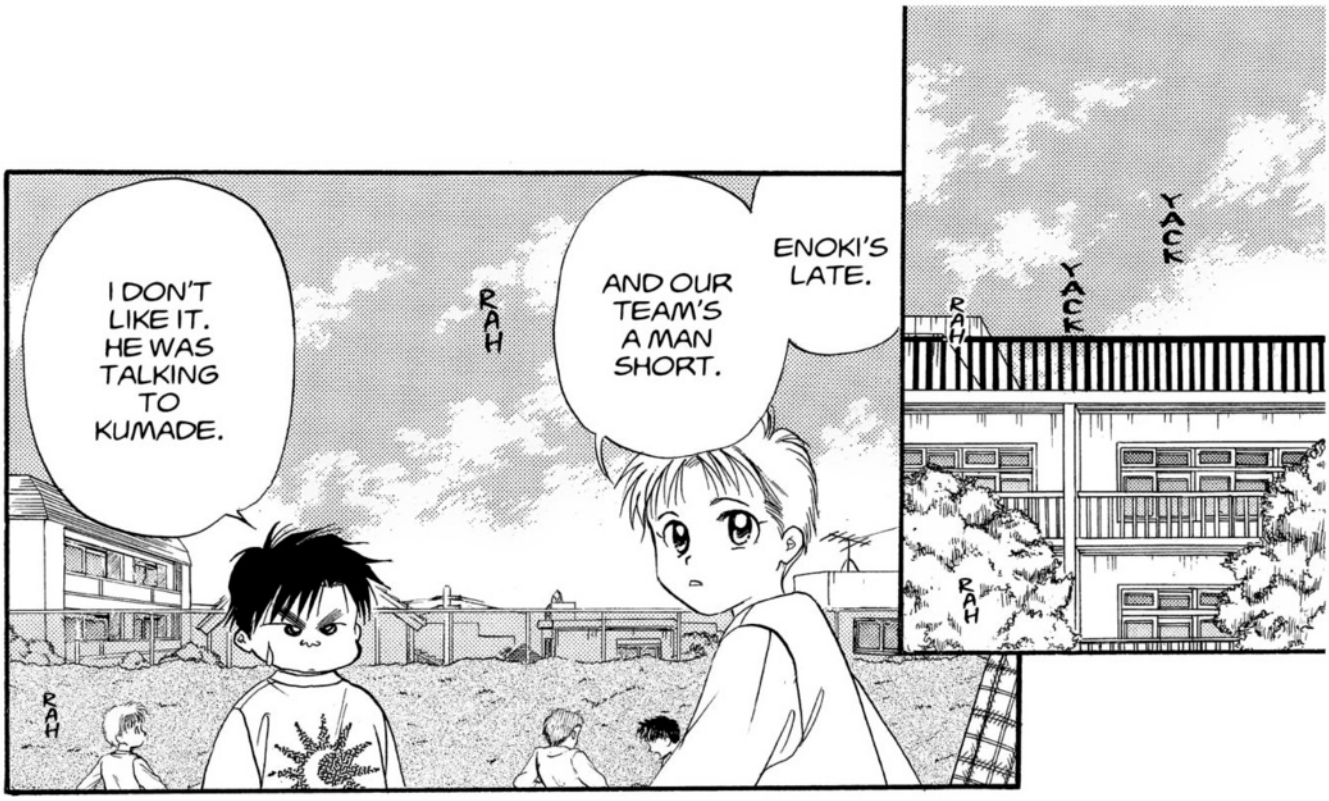

DID YOU EVER FIND YOUR CAT?
UH, NO. I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR IT TO COME HOME.


AYUKO IS MAD ABOUT WHAT I SAID AT THE FLOWER VIEWING.
SO I WANT TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU. SORRY!
...
ぶちぶち

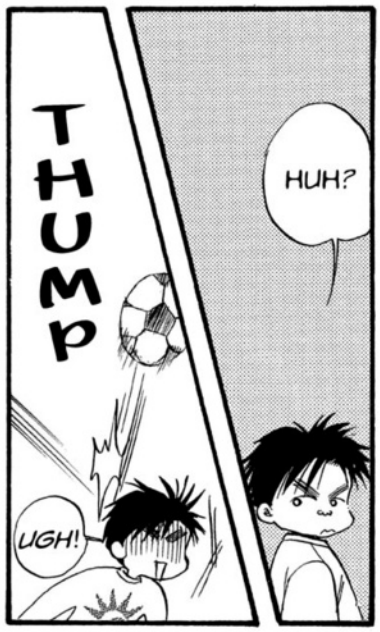
HEY! I DIDN'T COME HERE TO TALK TO YOU LIKE A FRIEND!
THAT'S A SURPRISE.



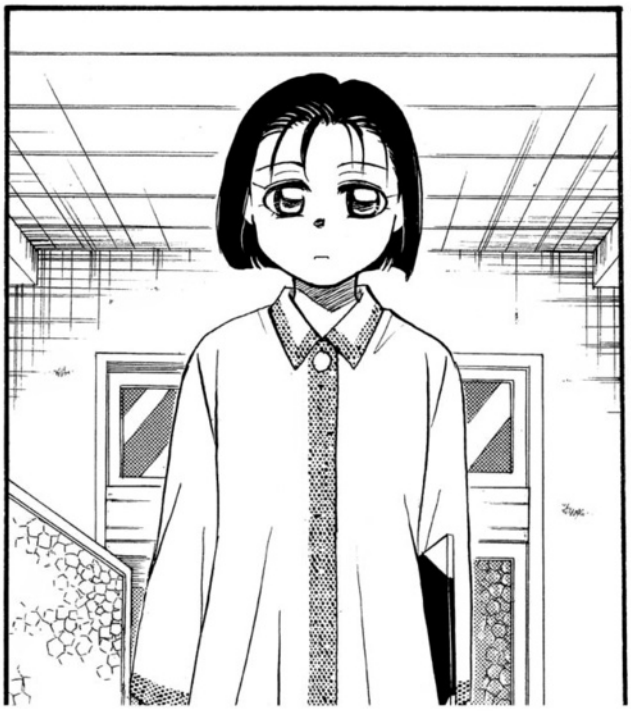
▲ All by eavesdropping.

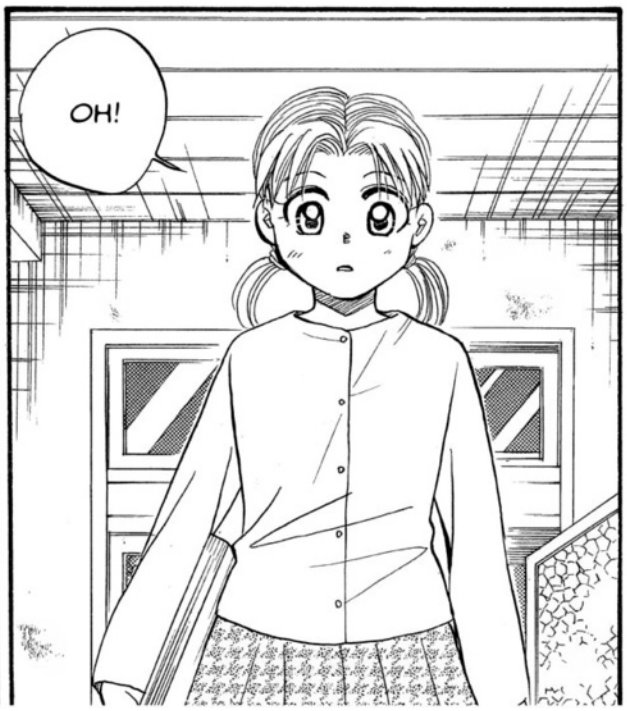

YACK
YACK
RAH
RAH
ENOKI'S LATE.
AND OUR TEAM'S A MAN SHORT.
RAH
I DON'T LIKE IT. HE WAS TALKING TO KUMADE.
RAH

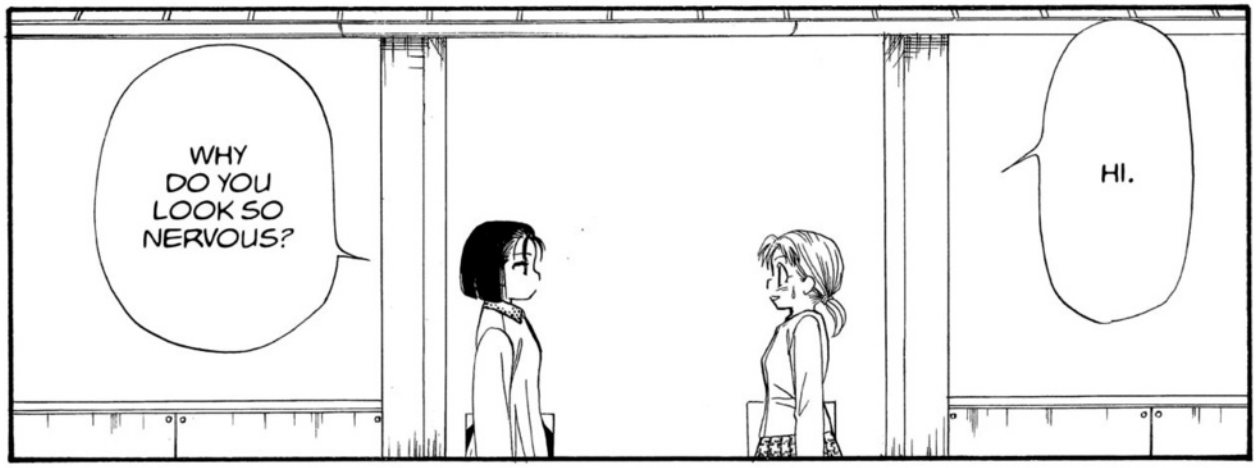
RAH
RAH

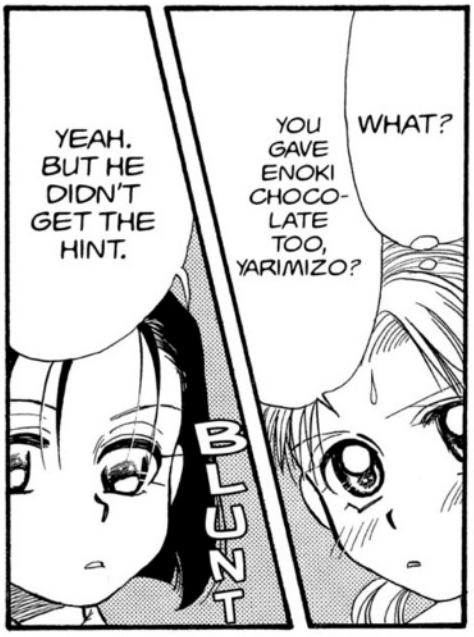

THUMP
UGH!
HUH?

IS HE OKAY?
I HOPE HE'S NOT TELLING HIM MORE GOSSIP.
GON, LOOK OUT!




OH!

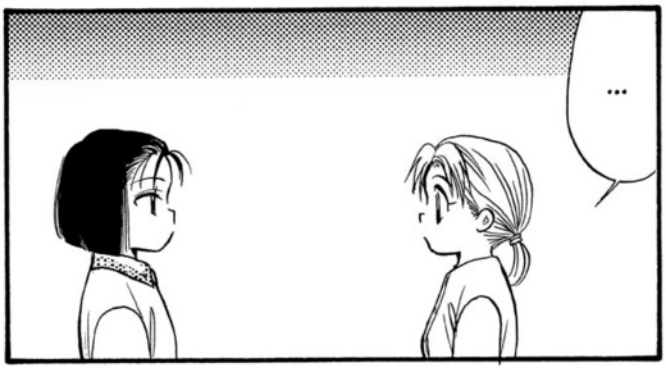

WHY DO YOU LOOK SO NERVOUS?
HI.

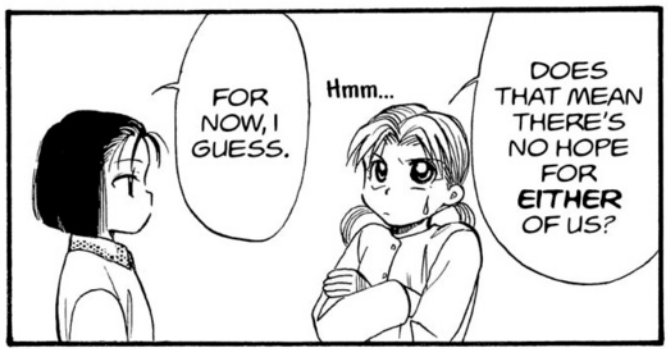

YEAH. BUT HE DIDN'T GET THE HINT.
YOU GAVE ENOKI CHOCOLATE TOO, YARIMIZO?
WHAT?
BLUNT

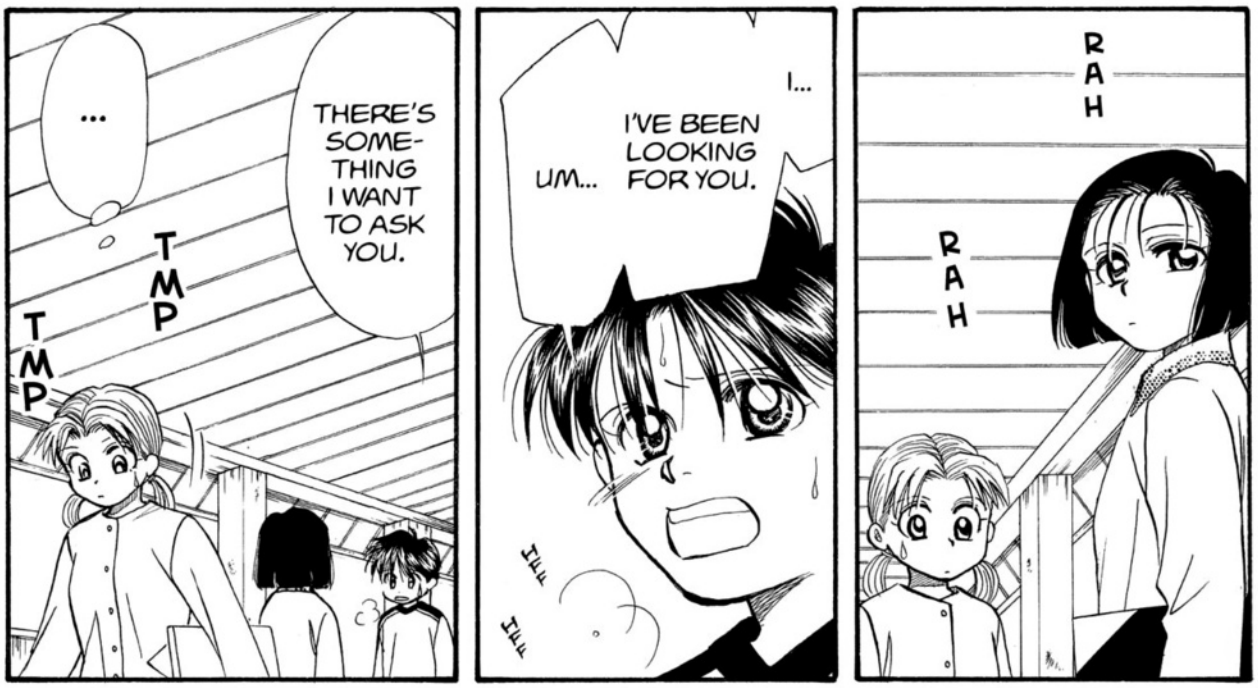
DON'T BE EMBARRASSED. I DID THE SAME THING.
...

YOU DIDN'T GIVE TAKUYA CHOCOLATES ON VALENTINE'S DAY JUST BECAUSE YOU HAD TO, DID YOU?
OH... NO PARTICULAR REASON...

HEY!
YARIMIZO!


...

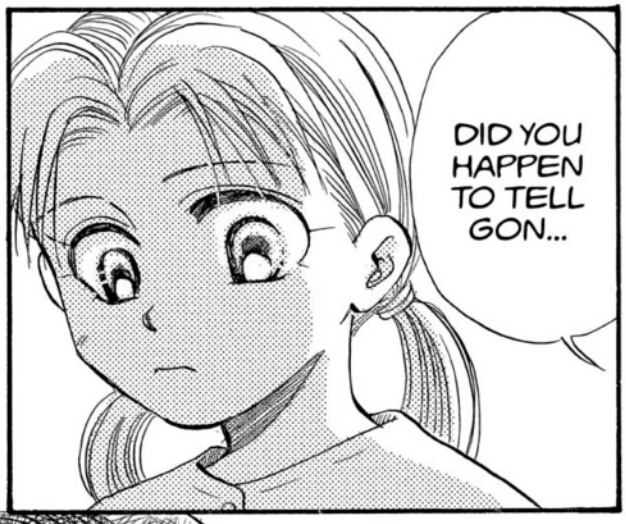

FOR NOW, I GUESS.
Hmm...
DOES THAT MEAN THERE'S NO HOPE FOR EITHER OF US?

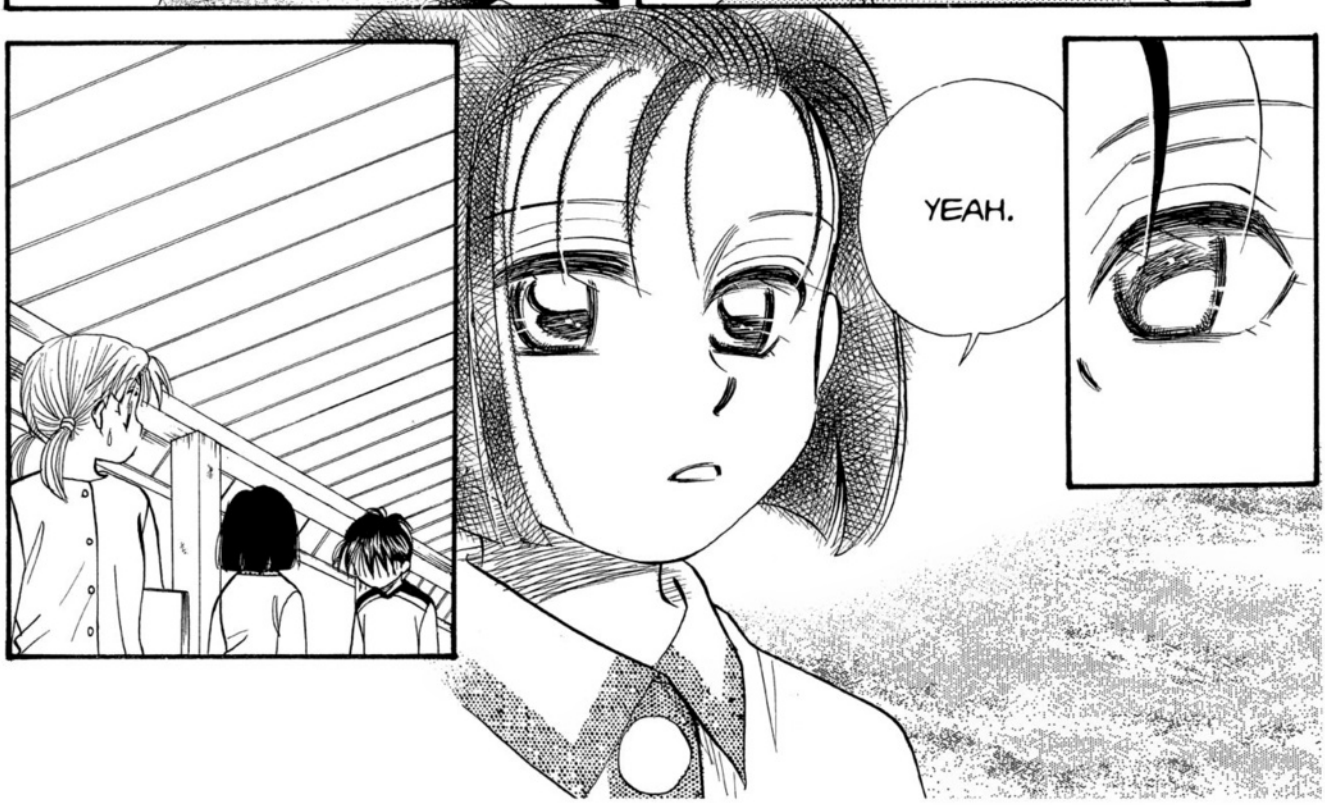

...
THERE'S SOME-THING I WANT TO ASK YOU.
TMP
TMP

I...
UM...
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

RAH
RAH

...THAT YOU...
...LIKED ME?

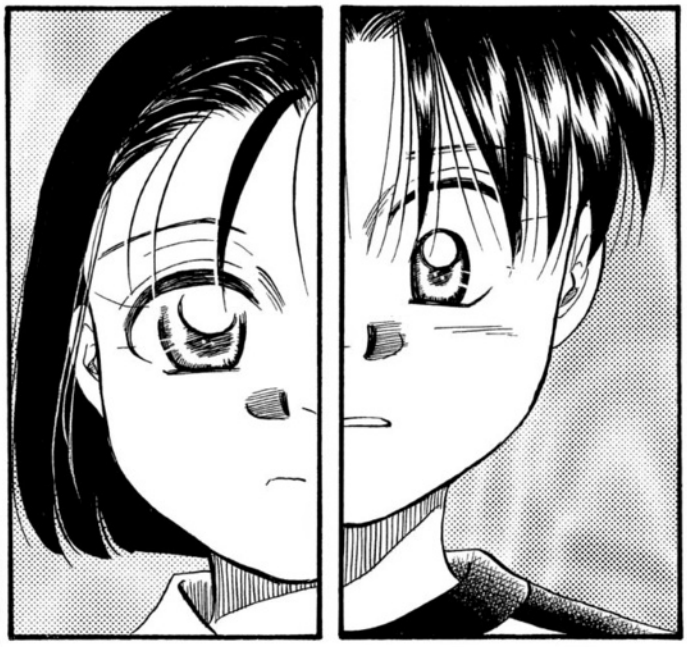

DID YOU HAPPEN TO TELL GON...


YEAH.

WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?
WHY?

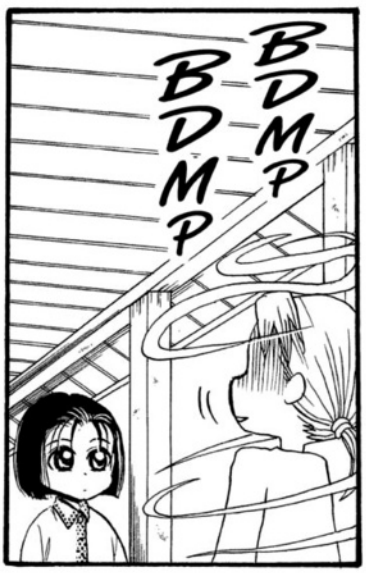
WHY NOT?
HUH?

SHE DIDN'T DO ANY-THING WRONG!



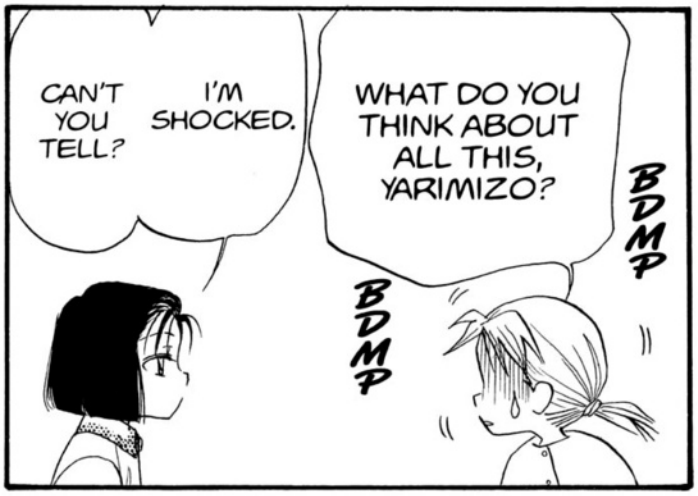
YOU'RE JUST UPSET BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT!
IT TAKES COURAGE TO TELL THE TRUTH!
TRY TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE GIRLS FEEL!
I...
RAH
RAH
DAK
I CAN'T THINK ABOUT GIRLS RIGHT NOW.
I...
IT'S TOO CON-FUSING!
SLAM
TMP
TMP
TMP

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?


BDMP
BDMP

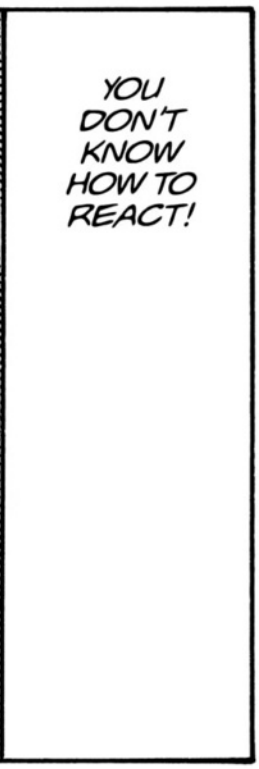
HE...

HE REJECTED ME JUST LIKE THAT.


CAN'T YOU TELL?
I'M SHOCKED.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THIS, YARIMIZO?
BDMP
BDMP

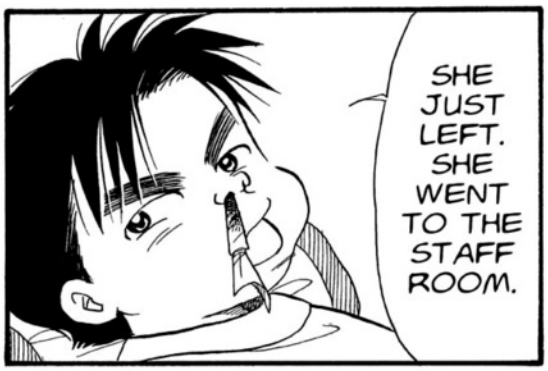
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS. THEY'RE ALL ACTING LIKE IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO'S WORKED UP?

SHE'S RIGHT.
BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE IT UNTIL SHE SAID IT.

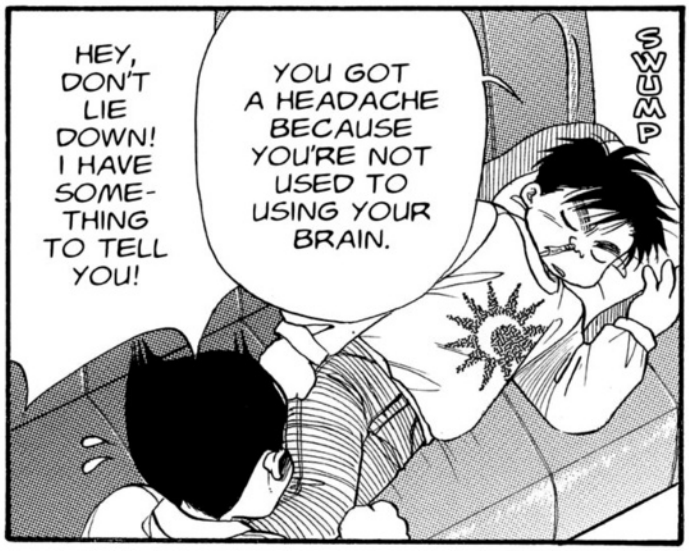

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT!

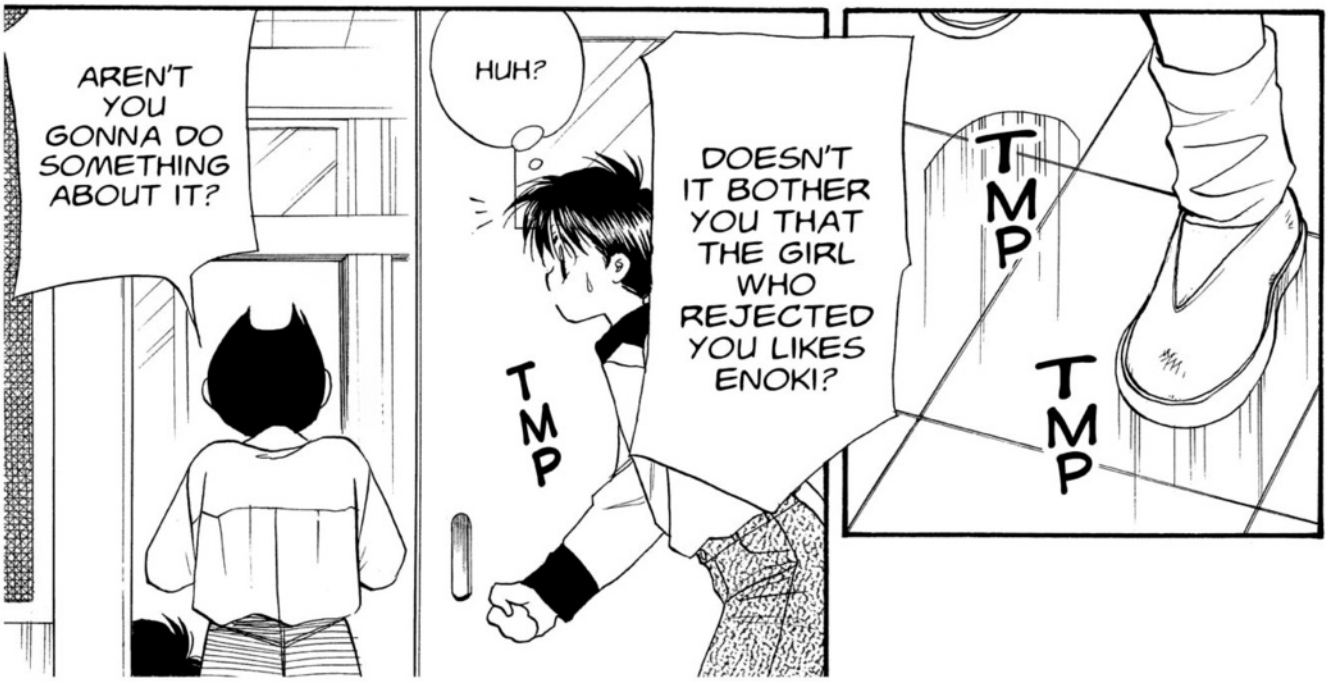
HERE COMES ENOKI.
GON WENT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.
RAH
RAH
WHY CAN'T I...
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
...SEE WHAT THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ARE FEELING?
THE NURSE'S OFFICE? HOW COME?
HE GOT HIT IN THE HEAD WITH A SOCCER BALL.
HE'S GOT A LUMP ON HIS HEAD, AND HIS NOSE WOULDN'T STOP BLEEDING.
NURSE
KLAK
NURSE...
I HAVE A HEADACHE...
I'M SUCH A WUSS.
ALL THIS TROUBLE IS MAKING MY HEAD HURT.
HMPH
HMPH
UGH... WHAT A MESS.

WAAH! IT'S THE CAUSE OF MY HEADACHE!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, GOOFBALL?


SHE JUST LEFT. SHE WENT TO THE STAFF ROOM.

I'VE BEEN THINK-ING...
YOU'RE WEIRD!
FWIP
WHAT NOW?


HEY, DON'T LIE DOWN! I HAVE SOME-THING TO TELL YOU!
YOU GOT A HEADACHE BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT USED TO USING YOUR BRAIN.
SWUMP


AREN'T YOU GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?
HUH?
TMP
DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU THAT THE GIRL WHO REJECTED YOU LIKES ENOKI?
TMP
TMP

Listening in.

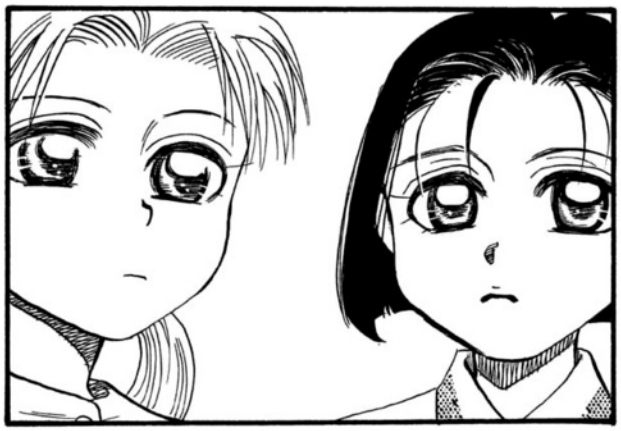
YOU GUYS ARE SO WEIRD! ARE YOU JUST GONNA CLOSE YOUR EYES?
ARGH
YOU DON'T GET IT.
YOU HAVE TO TRY TO PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES, I GUESS.
BUT THEY HAVE REASONS FOR FEELING THE WAY THEY DO.

I'M NOT PRETEND-ING IT DIDN'T HAPPEN.
RAH
RAH
I'M JUST MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS.
TMP
THAT'S NOT IT.
RAH
RAH

NOW I GET IT.
FUJII, FUKAYA ...
...YARI-MIZO AND GON...
THEY ALL TRIED TO ACT NORMAL.
IT'S NOT EASY...
...TO GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE.
I'VE...
HOW COME THOSE GUYS...
...KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH STUFF LIKE THIS?
...LEARNED A LOT FROM THEM.

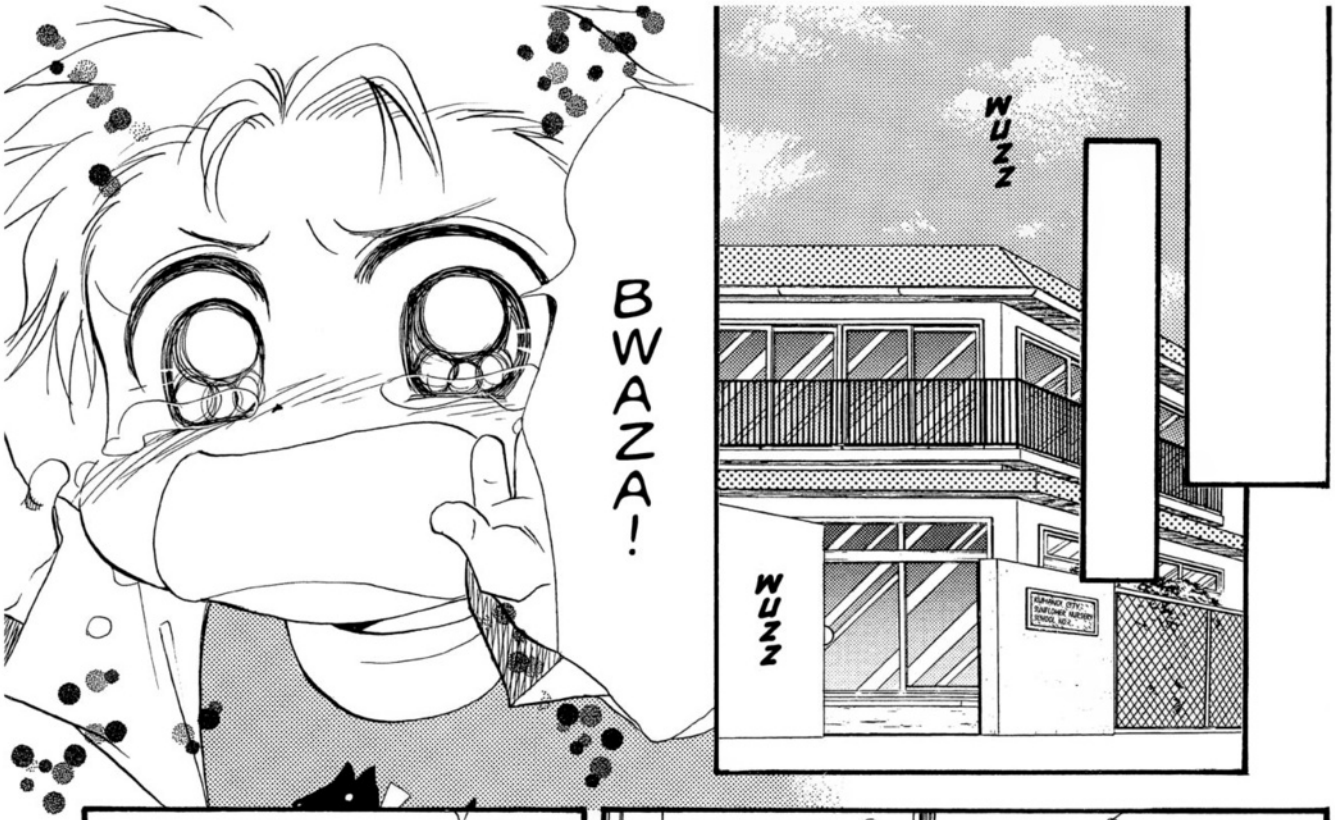
AFTER SCHOOL ...
WUZZ
WUZZ
UM...
SORRY FOR HOW I ACTED AT LUNCH.
I WAS FRUS-TRATED. I WASN'T BEING FAIR.
UMM
UMM
I SAID THINGS WITHOUT THINKING.
UMM
I'M SUPPOSED TO CLEAN THE COURTYARD ANYWAY.
I WANTED TO TALK IN PRIVATE.
IS THAT WHY YOU CALLED US OUT HERE?
HUH?
HE WANTS TO LET US DOWN EASY.
THIS IS HIS PLAN.
PLIP
PLIP
I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO DO IT.
THAT'S NOT IT!

REALLY?
TAKUYA'S SO SERIOUS!
Hee!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT MAD.
WHEW



...REALLY SORRY.
I'M...
ERK

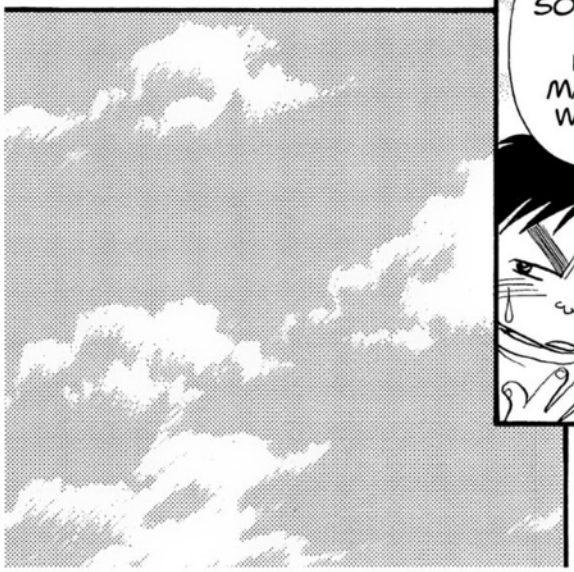
HE'S SOOO CUTE!
SEE YOU!
I'M GLAD.
SHING


WUZZ
WUZZ
BWAZA!

SOMEDAY THEY'LL TAKE OVER THE WORLD.
GIRL POWER IS AMAZ-ING, ISN'T IT?
You ugly!
What did you say?

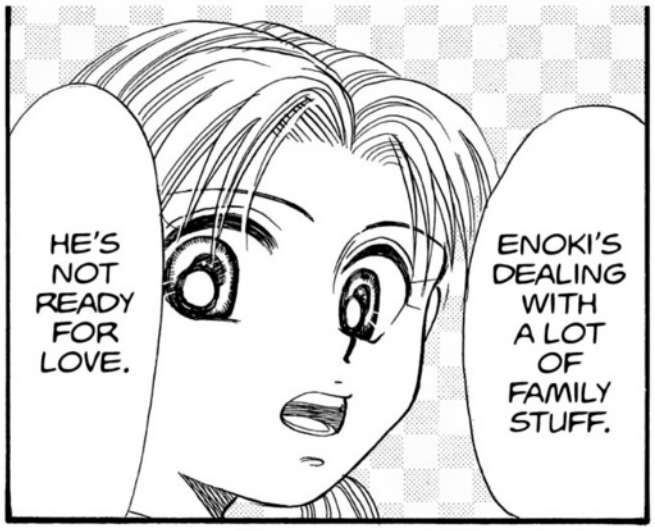
WAAH
YOU LET GO FIRST, HIRO!
UGLY!

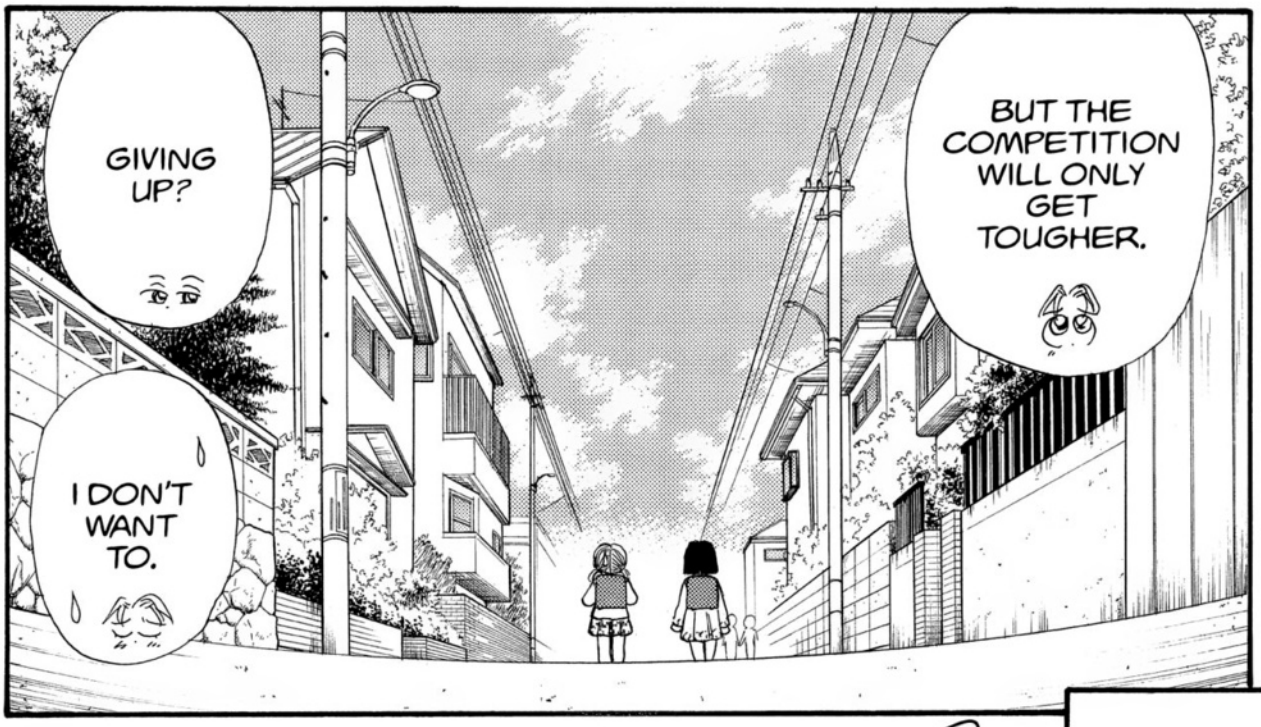
...
WAAAAH



SOMETIMES TAKUYA REALLY MAKES ME WONDER.
BDMP
BDMP

HUH?
FOR NOW, I LIKE **YOU** BETTER THAN I LIKE GIRLS, GON.





FRANCES'S REAL NAME IS "CAT," AND HIS OWNER IS KUMADE!

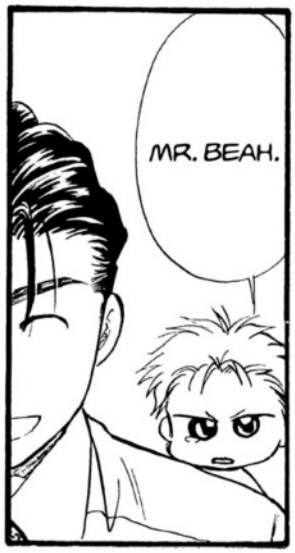
Chapter 101 / The End

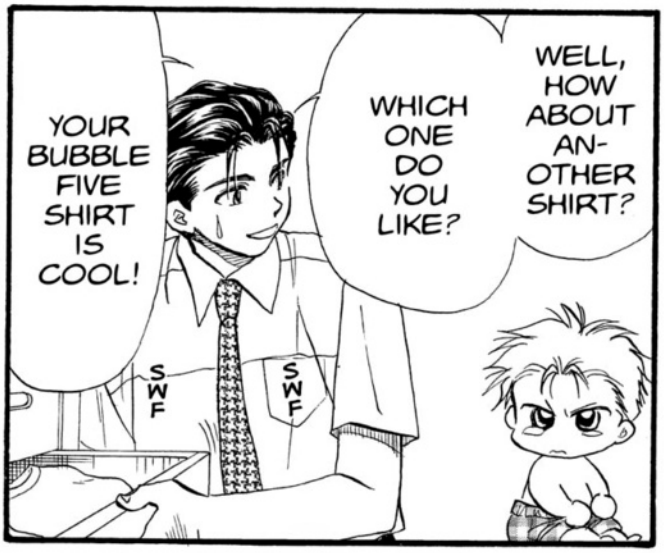
BABY & Me
Chapter 102

GRUMP
MINORU WAS IN A BAD MOOD THIS MORNING.
MINORU...
C'MON!
WHY WON'T YOU PUT THIS SHIRT ON?
WHUP
WE HAD TO THROW YOUR BEAR SHIRT AWAY. IT HAD SOY SAUCE STAINS ON IT.
DAD, MINORU WON'T GET DRESSED!
TAKUYA, HURRY UP AND EAT...
...OR YOU'LL BE LATE FOR SCHOOL.
STOP BEING STUBBORN!
IT'S GONE!
I WAN' MY BEAH!

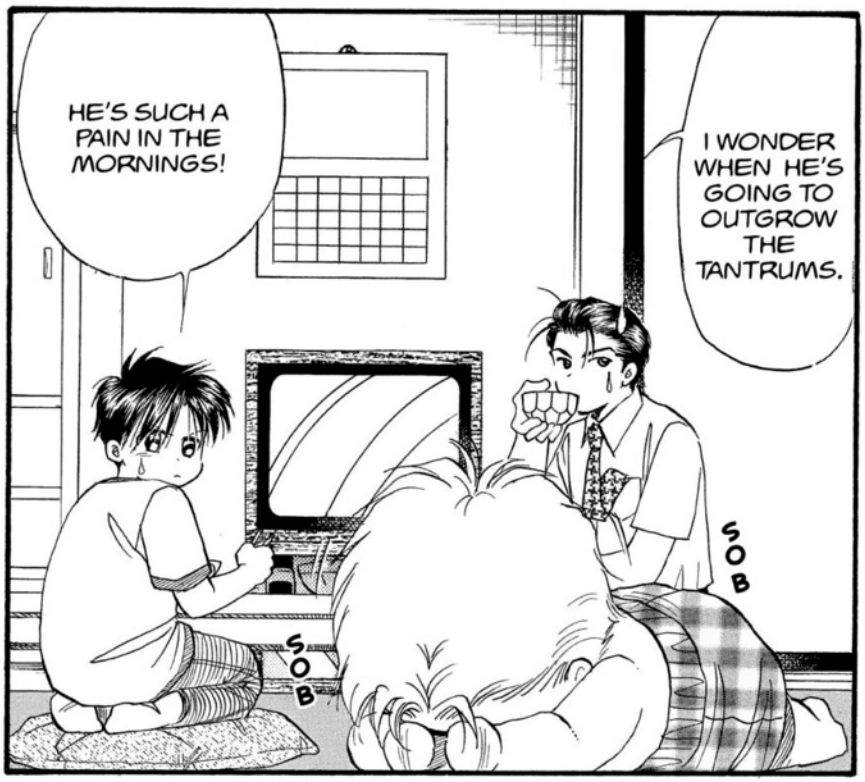
MINORU, BE A GOOD BOY AND PUT THIS ON, OKAY?
I'VE HAD IT! HE CAN GO TO SCHOOL NAKED!
TOMP
TOMP
NO.

CALM DOWN. IF YOU GET UPSET...
...IT'LL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE.


MR. BEAH.

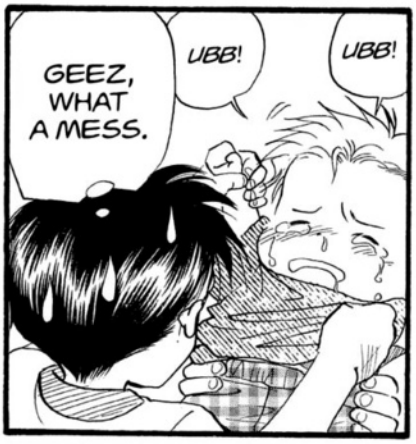

YOUR BUBBLE FIVE SHIRT IS COOL!
WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE?
WELL, HOW ABOUT AN-OTHER SHIRT?
SWF
SWF

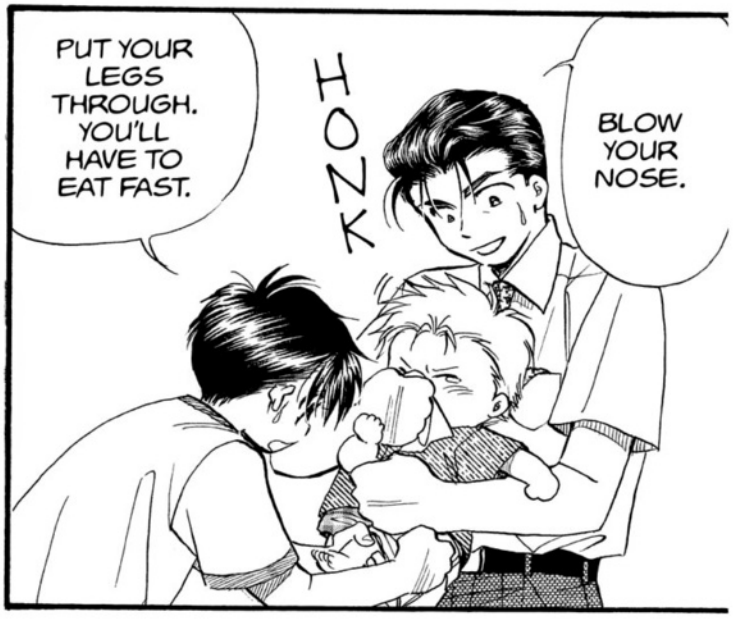
BE REASON-ABLE, MINORU!
Did you call me stupid?
I HATE DADDY! STUPID!
WAAAAH
WE DON'T HAVE THAT SHIRT ANY-MORE!



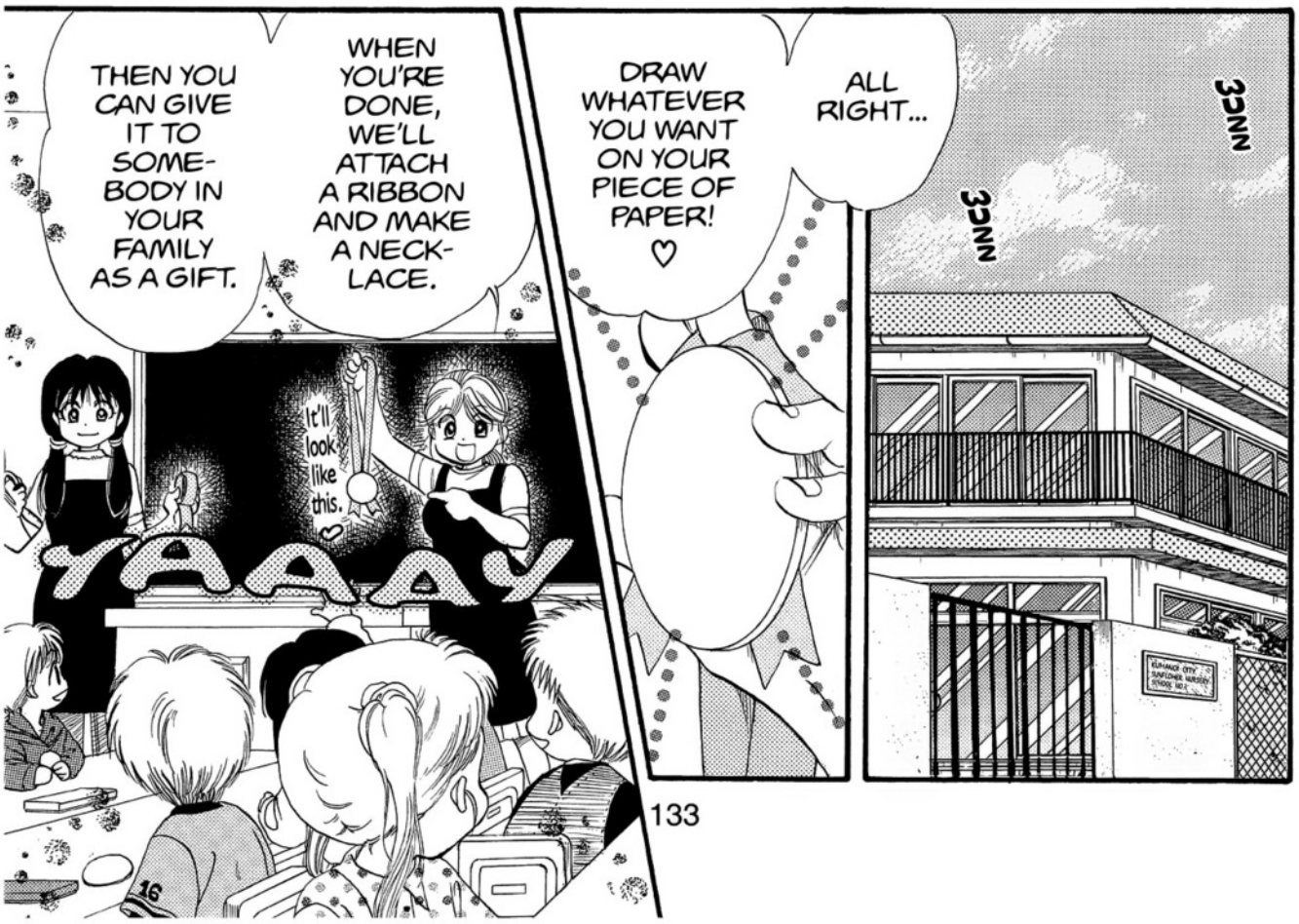
MINORU CRIED FOR 30 MINUTES THIS MORNING.

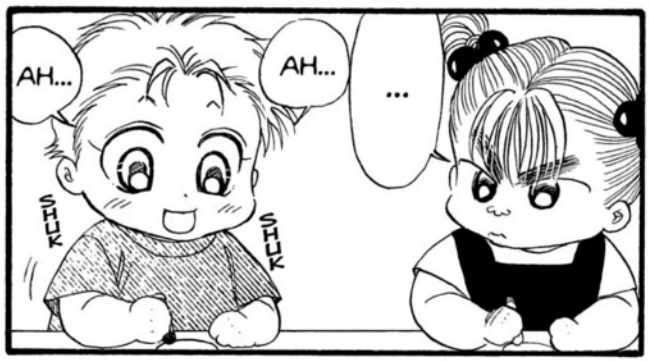
We're gonna be late!

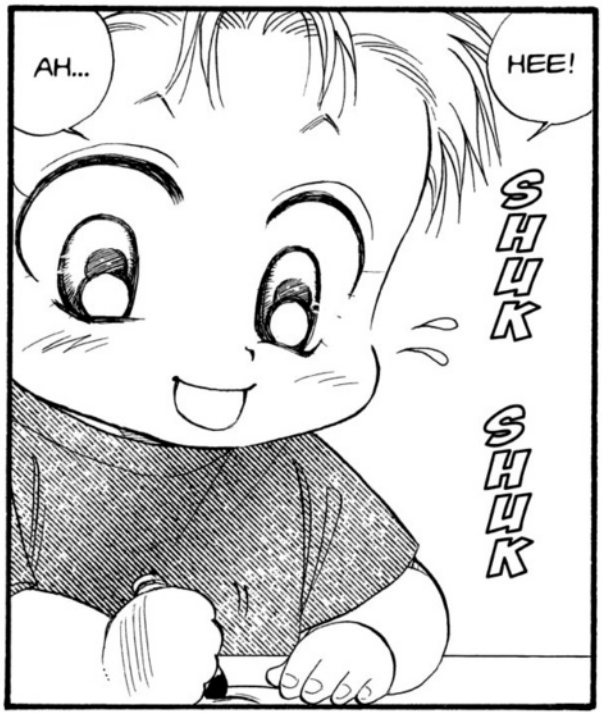




WHEN MINORU HAS A TANTRUM ...
...IT'S REALLY HARD TO CALM HIM DOWN.
I'M SICK OF IT.
SOMETIMES I THINK HE'S JUST A BRAT.
...
MAYBE LITTLE KIDS ARE LIKE THAT IN EVERY FAMILY.
Probably.
I DON'T KNOW.

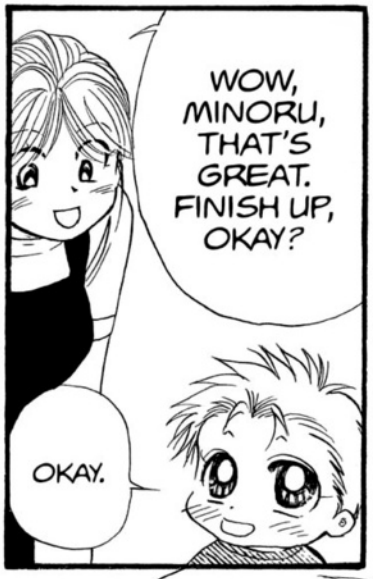

ALL RIGHT...
DRAW WHATEVER YOU WANT ON YOUR PIECE OF PAPER! ♡
WHEN YOU'RE DONE, WE'LL ATTACH A RIBBON AND MAKE A NECK-LACE.
THEN YOU CAN GIVE IT TO SOME-BODY IN YOUR FAMILY AS A GIFT.
It'll look like this. ♡
YAAAY
16

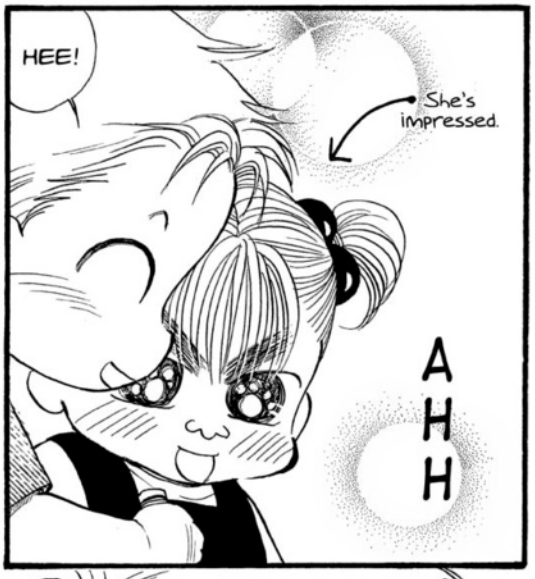

AH...
AH...
...
SHUK
SHUK

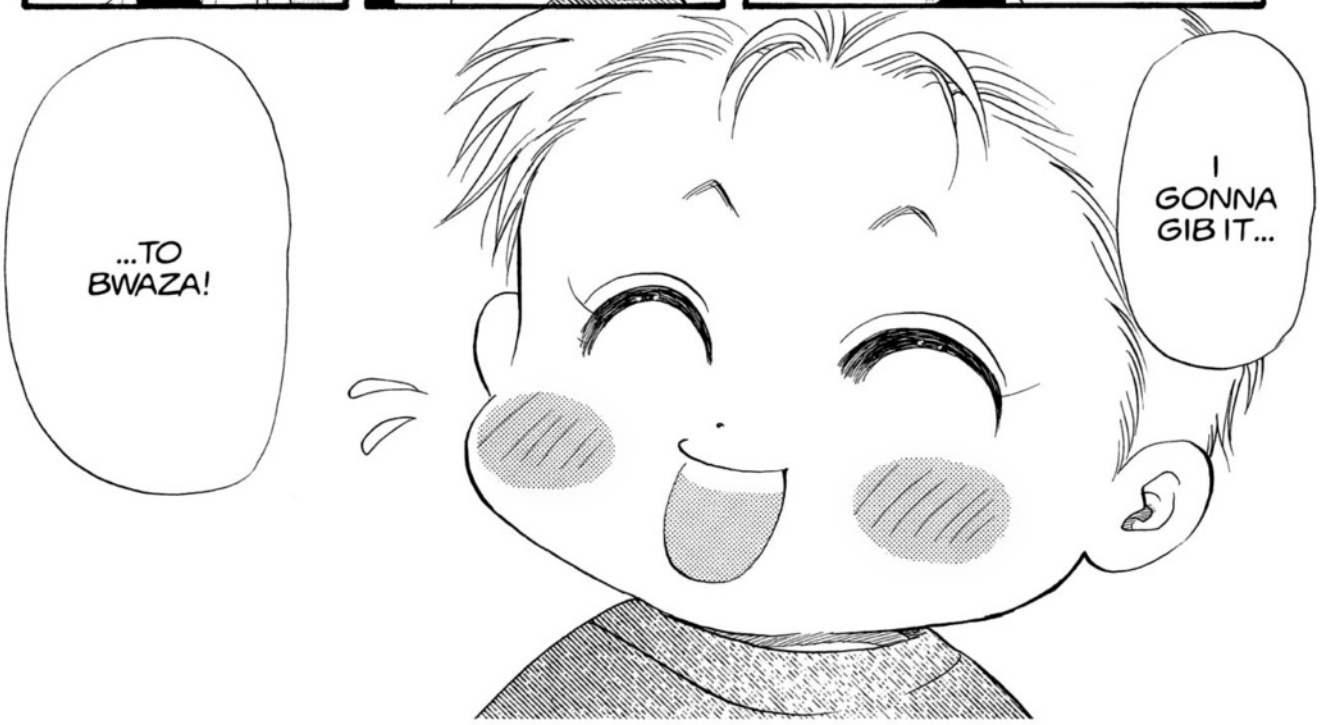

AH...
HEE!
SHUK
SHUK
SHUK

SHUK
SHUK

ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE IT TO SOMEONE?


WOW, MINORU, THAT'S GREAT. FINISH UP, OKAY?
OKAY.


HEE!
She's impressed.
AHH


...TO BWAZA!
I GONNA GIB IT...

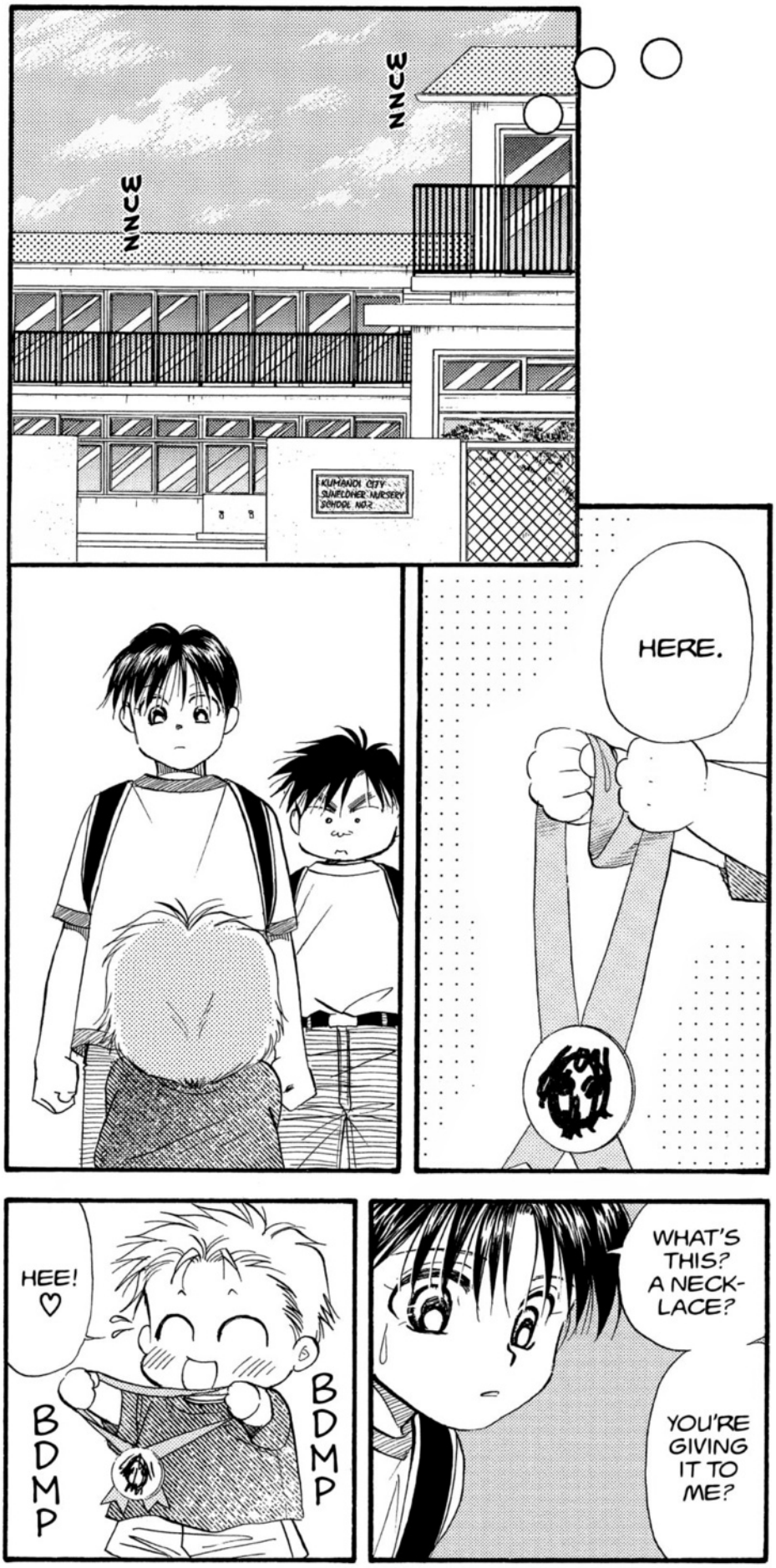
Author's Note Part 5

A reader wrote in and asked if Tomoko Kimura always wears lipstick. The answer is no. She just has full lips.

☆

This is a news flash! A photo of an alien being taken away by agents was discovered in the final chapter. Here it is:

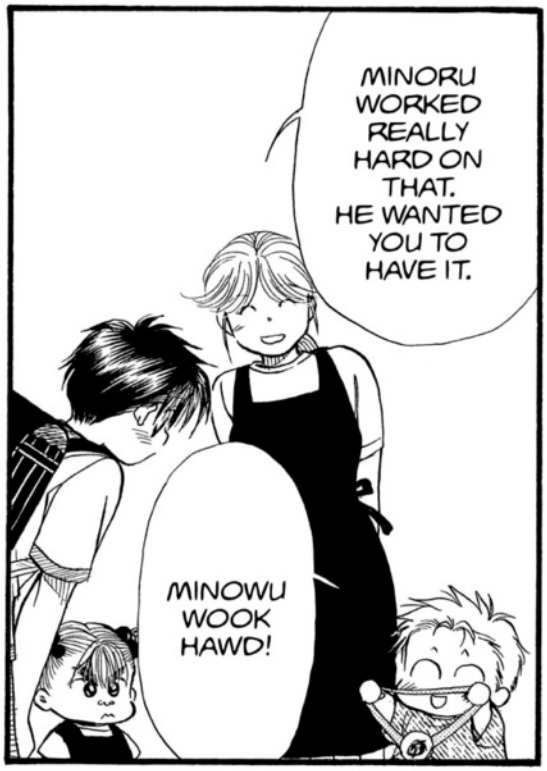
The smaller silhouette is believed to be the alien. Scary, isn't it? Yeah, scary.



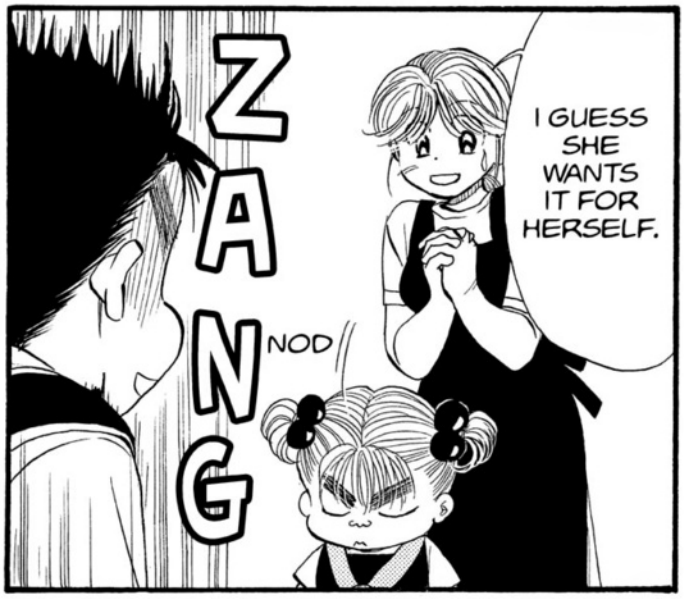
WHUP
YEAH.

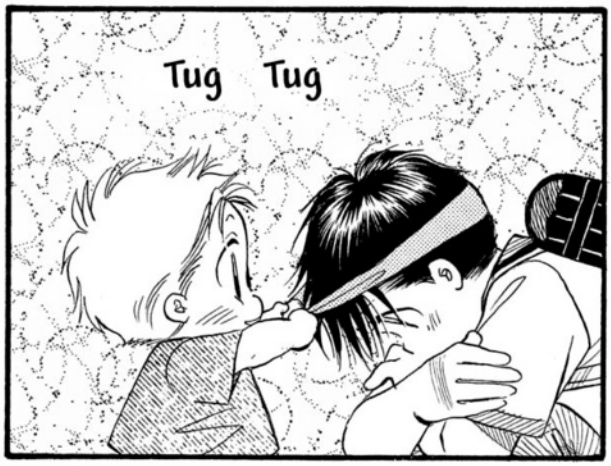
SWIP

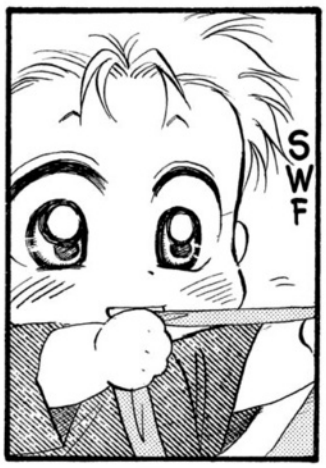
WHAT ABOUT YOU, HIRO? DID YOU MAKE ONE FOR ME?


MINORU WORKED REALLY HARD ON THAT. HE WANTED YOU TO HAVE IT.
MINOWU WOOK HAWD!

HUH?
...CAN YOU PUT IT ON ME?
MINORU!!!


ZANG
NOD
I GUESS SHE WANTS IT FOR HERSELF.

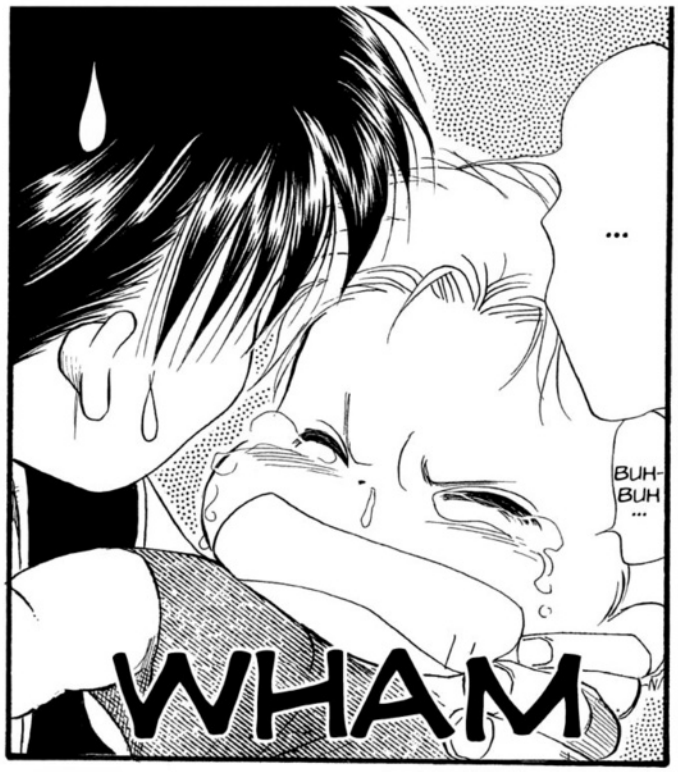

Tug Tug


SWF

UM...
SHK
SHK
PLUP
WHOOSH

MINORU, STOP CRYING!
SHE'S GOING TO FIX IT! ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

OW! MY EARS!
...
Glue
MINORU, IT'S OKAY!
NING
NING
NING
NING
I CAN FIX IT!
SOB
SOB


...
BUH-BUH ...
WHAM

WAAAH
ZHEEN

MINORU!
WHAP
STOP CRYING!

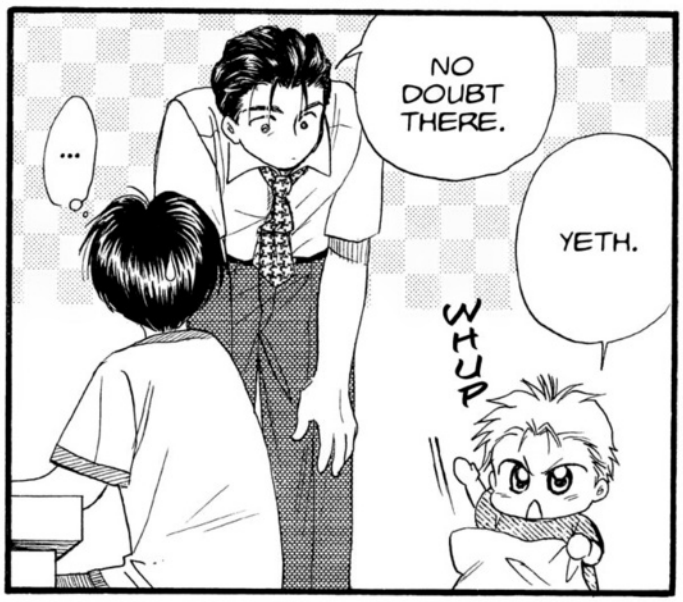
FINE!
TWITCH
TWITCH
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU ANYMORE!
ZANG

BUH...
BRR
BRR

HE CAN JUST STAY HERE!
HUH? ARE YOU SURE?
LET'S GO, GON!
SOB
SOB

HMPH!
WHUP
OH!

...MINORU WILL RUN AFTER ME...
...IF HE THINKS I'M MAD AT HIM.
TUP TUP TUP TUP
WAAAH!
BWAZA!
HMPH!
HMPH!
I'M ONLY DOING THIS...
...BECAUSE I KNOW...
KLAK
I'M HOME! ♡
Ta-da!
GARDEN
MINORU! HERE'S THE MR. BEAR SHIRT I PROMISED YOU!
HI, DAD.
HA HA HA... WANNA TRY IT ON?
YAAAY ♡


...
NO DOUBT THERE.
YETH.
WHUP

AREN'T YOU GOING TO TRY IT ON? CAN YOU PUT IT ON BY YOUR-SELF?
MINORU?
WOB
WOB
SWEEF
SWEEF

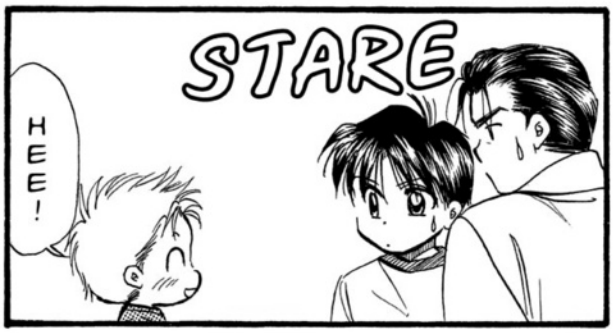
DON'T I KNOW IT.
IF THIS KEEPS UP, YOU'RE GOING TO STOP HAVING REGULAR TWO-DAY WEEKENDS...
...AND IT'LL BE NORMAL FOR YOU TO WORK SIX DAYS A WEEK.

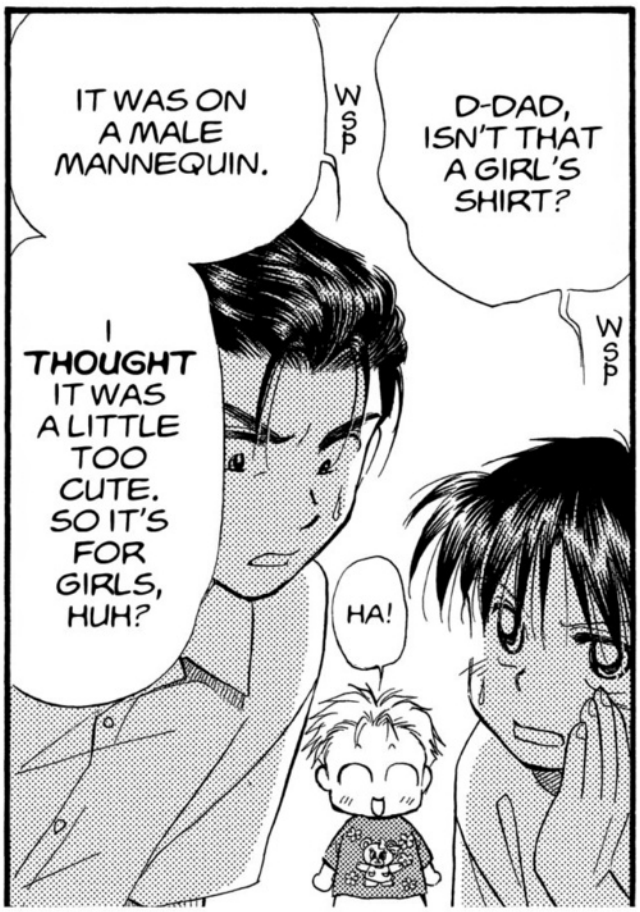
HUH?
YOU HAVE TO WORK TOMORROW? BUT IT'S SATURDAY.

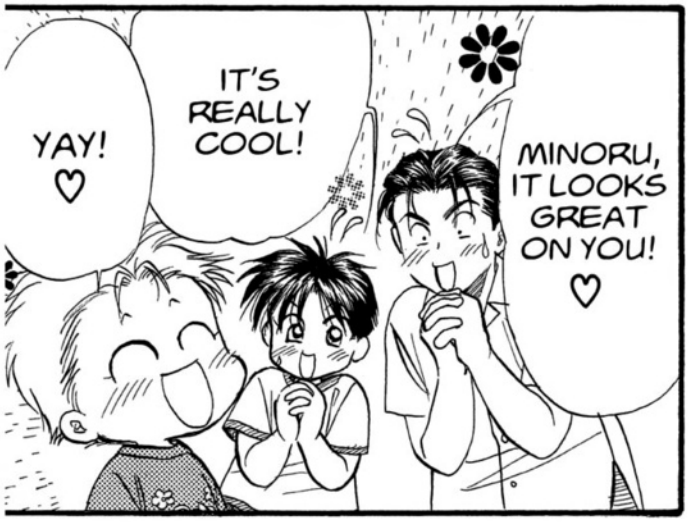
OKAY.
GOOD, HE LIKES THE IDEA.

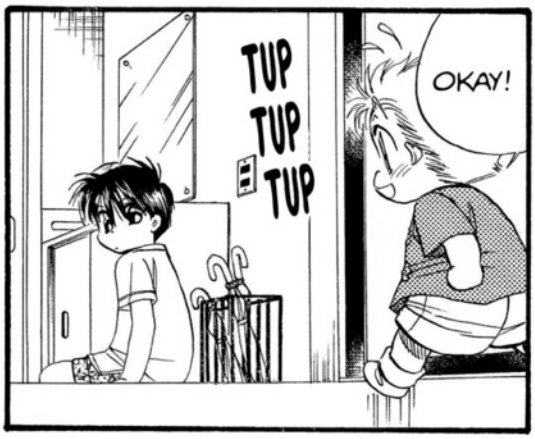
WE CAN MEET SOME-WHERE.
WHY DON'T WE EAT OUT TOMOR-ROW NIGHT?
SWF

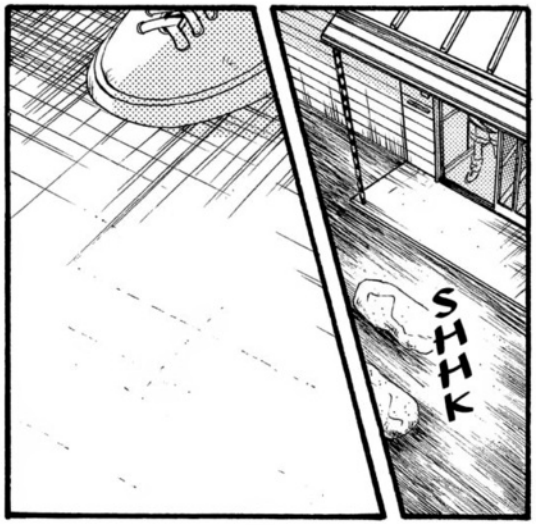
DADDY!
BWAZA!
CUTENESS
MR. BEAH!


STARE
HEE!


D-DAD, ISN'T THAT A GIRL'S SHIRT?
WSP
IT WAS ON A MALE MANNEQUIN.
WSP
I THOUGHT IT WAS A LITTLE TOO CUTE. SO IT'S FOR GIRLS, HUH?
HA!


MINORU, IT LOOKS GREAT ON YOU! ♡
IT'S REALLY COOL!
YAY! ♡


TUP TUP TUP
OKAY!

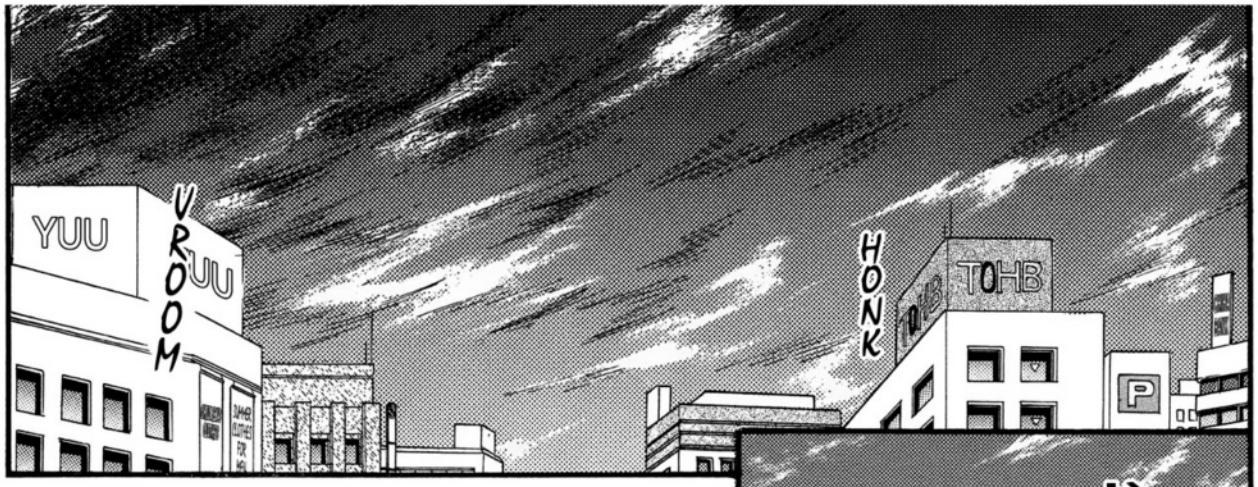

SHHK

THE NEXT DAY...
MINORU!
LET'S GET GOING!

IF...
...HE REALIZED HE WAS WEARING A GIRL'S SHIRT, HE'D HAVE A FIT.

THE DAYS ARE GETTING LONGER.
SUMMER'S ALMOST HERE.

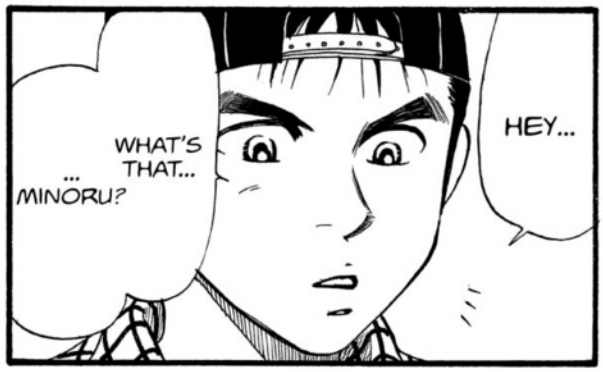
WHUP


YUU
VROOM
HONK
TOHB
P

HEY!
TAKUYA! MINORU!
SEIICHI ...
WHERE ARE YOU GUYS GOING?
ZZNN
ZZNN
KUM

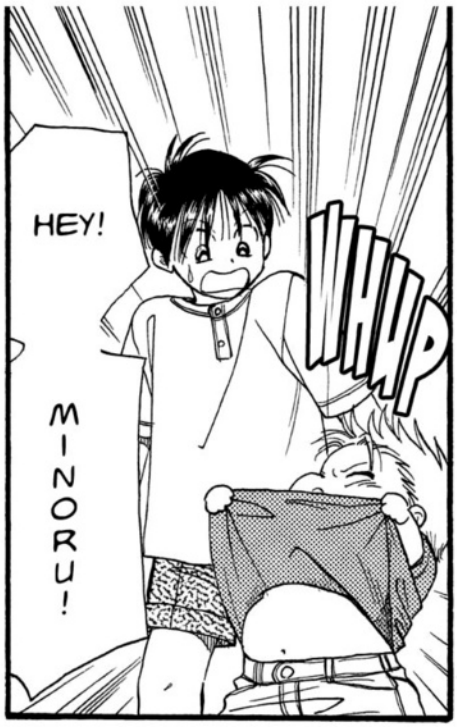
HUH?

ZZNN
KUM ANOI STAT ION
ZZNN

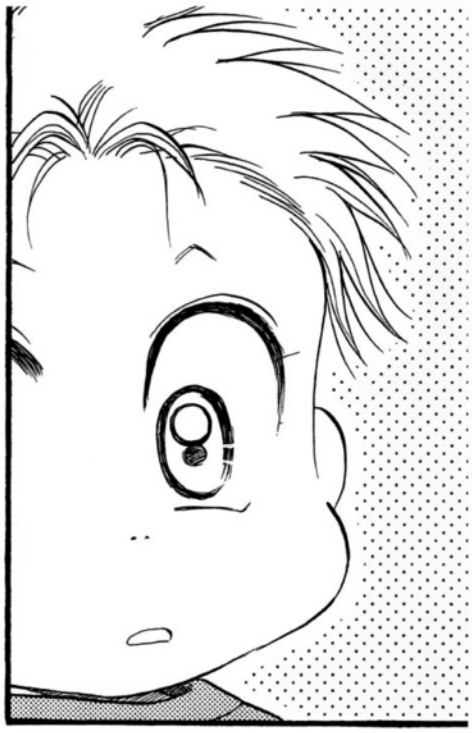

HEY...
WHAT'S THAT...
... MINORU?

ISN'T THAT A GIRL'S SHIRT?
HA HA
!

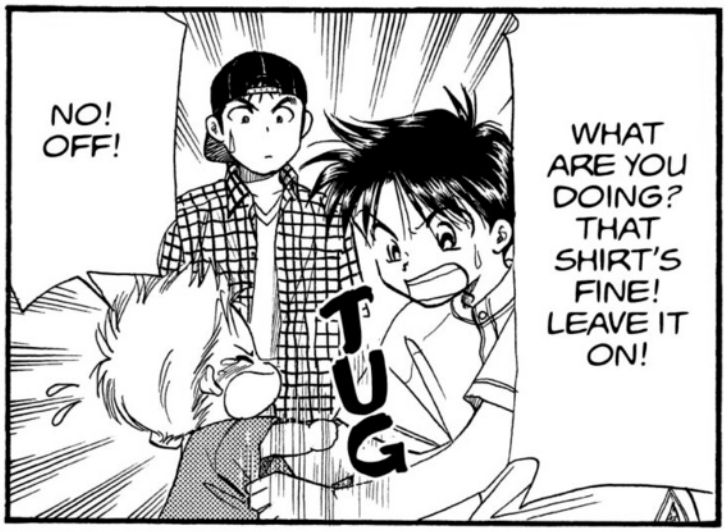
WE'RE MEETING DAD.
WE'RE GOING OUT TO EAT.
MAYBE BARBE-CUE.
IS THAT RIGHT? SOUNDS GOOD. DID YOUR DAD HAVE TO WORK TODAY OR SOME-THING?
TOO BAD.
Yeah.


HEY!
MINORU!
WHIP

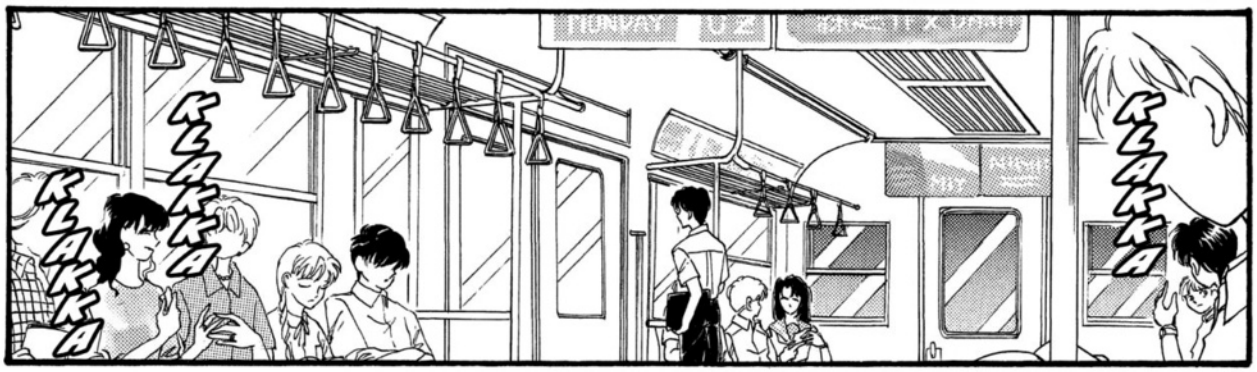
OF COURSE IT IS!
WHAT? NO! THAT'S NOT A GIRL'S SHIRT!
EDMP
EDMP

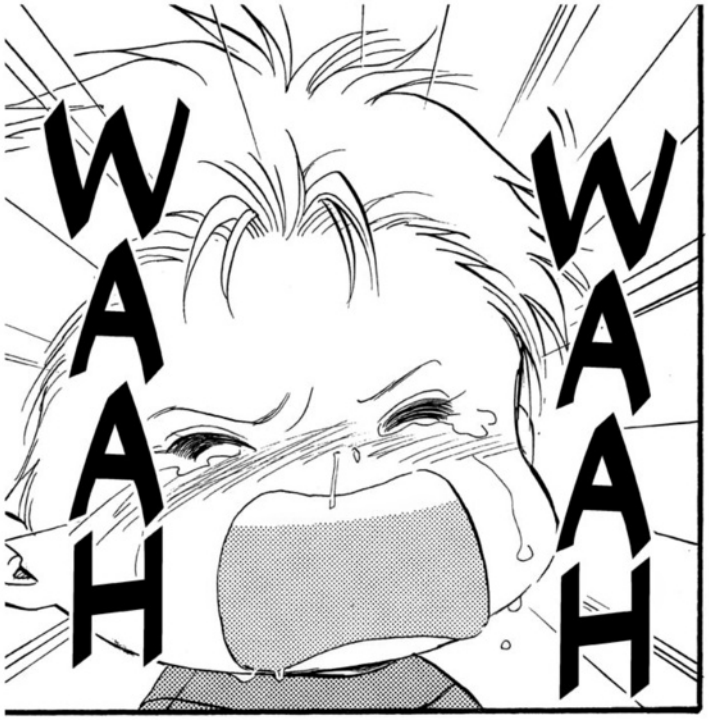


UM... DID I...
...SAY THE WRONG THING?
EKRITCH


NO! OFF!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THAT SHIRT'S FINE! LEAVE IT ON!
TUG

SEIICHI, YOU BONE-HEAD!
SOB!
SOB!
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
SEE YA!


KLAKKA
KLAKKA
KLAKKA


WAAH
WAAH

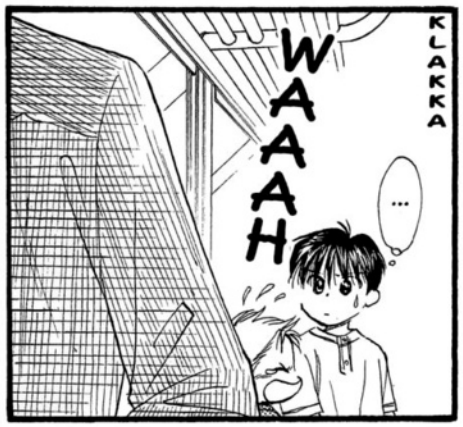
WAAH
WAAH

KLAKKA
GAAGH
WAAAAH
MINORU...
WSP
EVERY-BODY'S LOOKING AT YOU. STOP CRYING.
WSP
KLAKKA

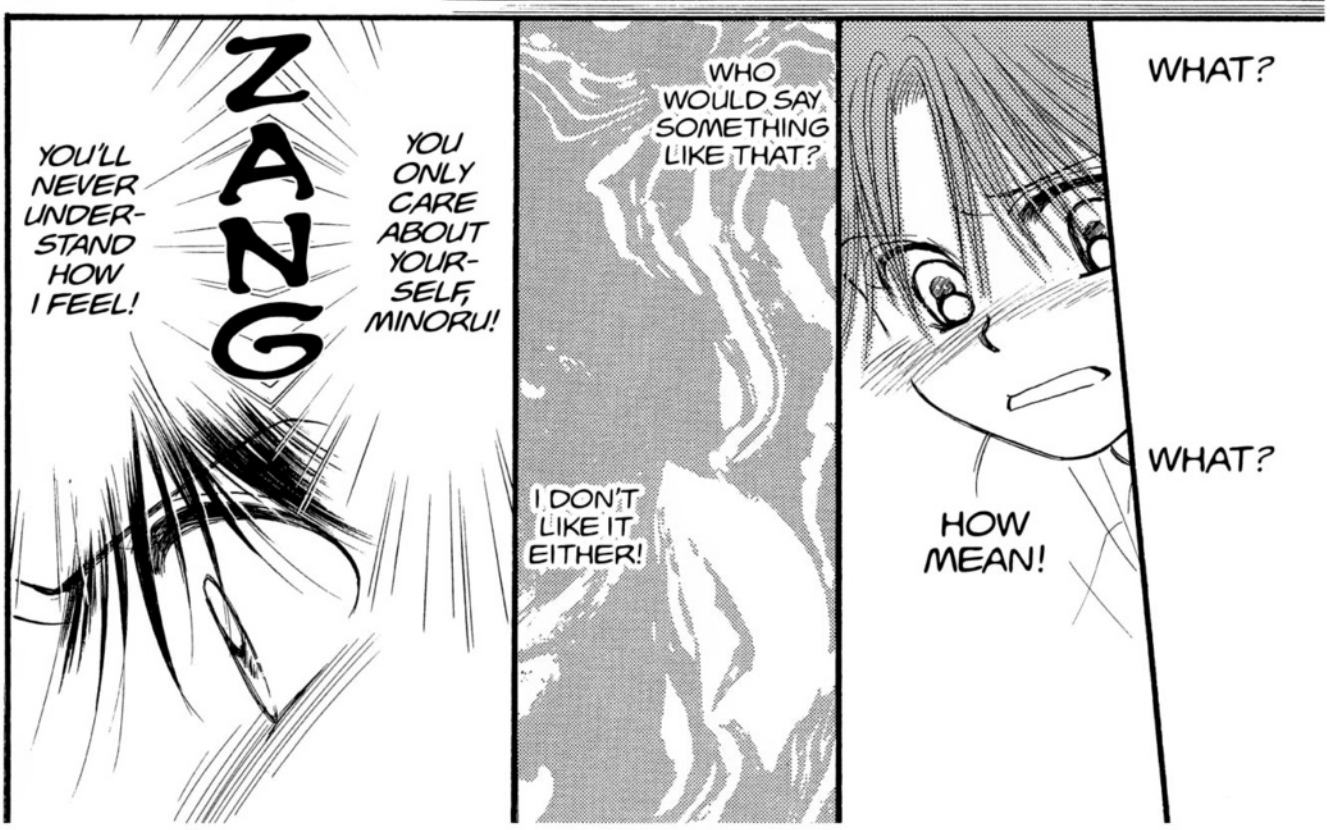
GUUUUH

LOOK!
EVERYBODY HATES YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE SO NOISY, MINORU! NOBODY LIKES A CRYBABY!
WAAH

UH...
SWUP
GWAH

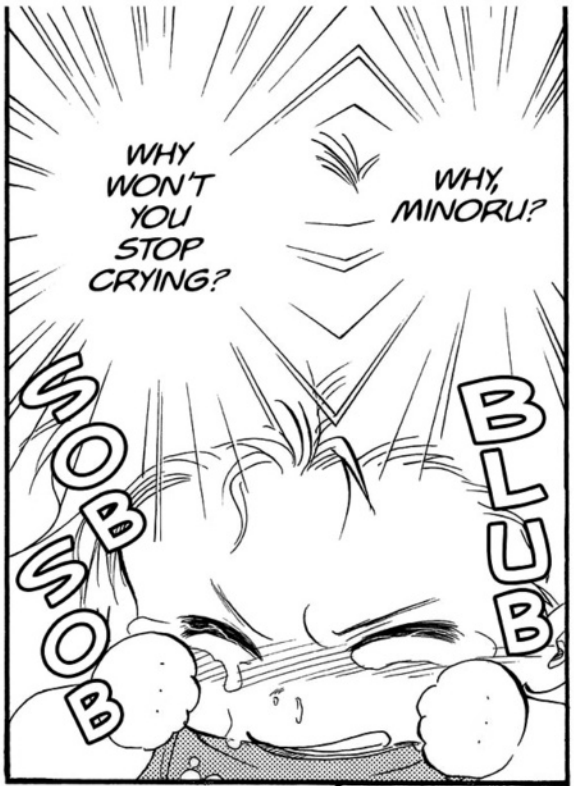

KLAKKA
WAAAAH
...

THIS IS WHY I DON'T LIKE KIDS.
HMPH! WHAT A NOISY CHILD! MAKE HIM STOP CRYING!
KLAKKA
KLAKKA
KLAKKA
KLAKKA
KLAKKA
WAAH
GRRR
DARN IT!
I COULD THROTTLE THAT LITTLE BRAT!
Ugh!


ZANG
YOU'LL NEVER UNDER-STAND HOW I FEEL!
YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT YOUR-SELF, MINORU!
WHO WOULD SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I DON'T LIKE IT EITHER!
WHAT?
WHAT?
HOW MEAN!

SIGH

WHY DO YOU KEEP SCREAMING OVER SOMETHING SO STUPID?
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
SOB SOB
Minoru


WHY WON'T YOU STOP CRYING?
WHY, MINORU?
SOB SOB SOB
BLUB

WUZZ
MUSIC
WUZZ
SHOUCHI PUB

CHAN'S
WUZZ
CHILDREN'S CLOTHES 50% OFF
SUMMER T-SHIRT 980
980
WUZZ

KLAKKA
MINORU...
KLAKKA
...AFTER WE MEET DAD AT THE STATION...
...I'LL FIND A MR. BEAR SHIRT FOR YOU.
KLAKKETA
SWUP
SO STOP CRYING, OKAY?
KLAKKA

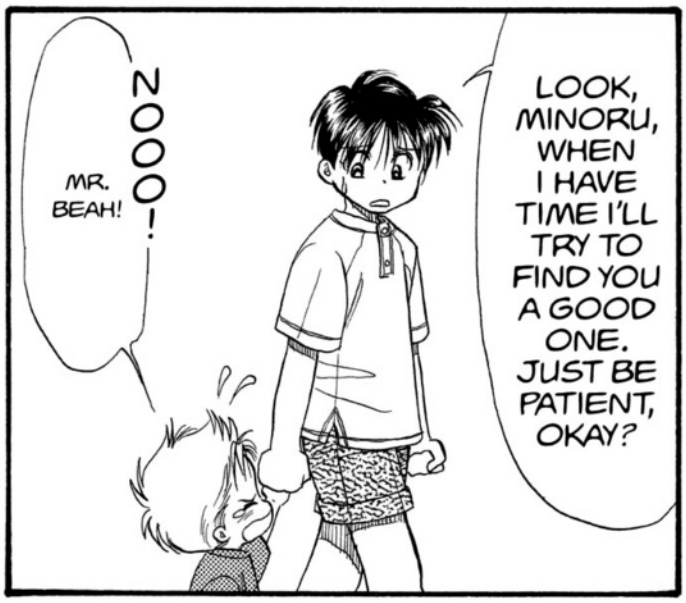
YOU DON'T MIND SOMETHING FROM OUR SALE BIN, DO YOU?
NO.
I THINK WE'VE GOT A FEW LIKE THAT.
50 %
SALE
THAT'S RIGHT. DO YOU HAVE ONE?
MINORU
CAMPION
THESE ARE THE ONLY ONES I CAN FIND.
A T-SHIRT WITH A BEAR ON IT?
FOR YOUR LITTLE BROTHER, EH?
NO.
DON'T YOU LIKE IT?
WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?
SHING
BEAR'S ARMY
THIS ONE'S NICE.
I FOUND ANOTHER ONE.
WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE BEST, MINORU?
TWO OF THEM HAVE REALISTIC BEARS ON THEM...
...AND THE OTHER ONE LOOKS KIND OF GIRLY.
DON' WIKE.
SUMMER CLOTHES
OFF
WHAT CAN WE DO? THE OTHER STORES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAVE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME STOCK.
This is all one shopping district.
NO! I DON' WIKE IT!
WHY NOT? IT LOOKS GREAT.
GRR

FWUFF
AND THIS ONE.

SHING
THERE'S THIS ONE.
$50

ISN'T THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
WE HAVE OTHERS, BUT THEY'RE A BIT MORE EXPENSIVE.
OKAY.
WAAH

SIGH
THE BEARS ON THE BLOUSE ARE THE MOST LIKE MR. BEAR.
WAAAH
CHAN'S
COME AGAIN.

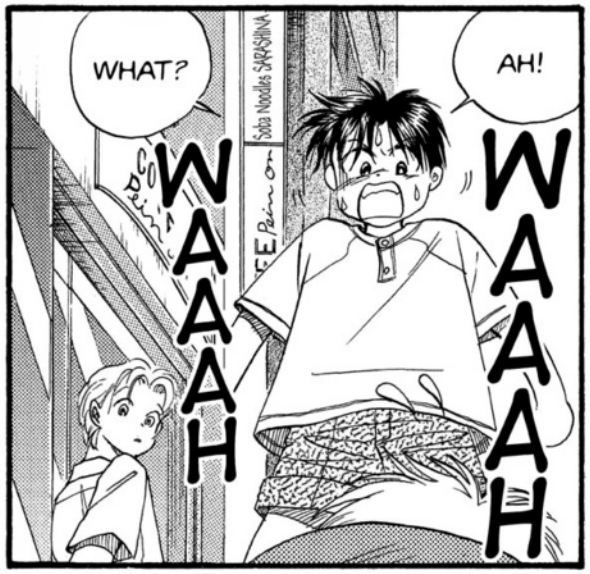

LOOK, MINORU, WHEN I HAVE TIME I'LL TRY TO FIND YOU A GOOD ONE. JUST BE PATIENT, OKAY?
NOOO!
MR. BEAH!

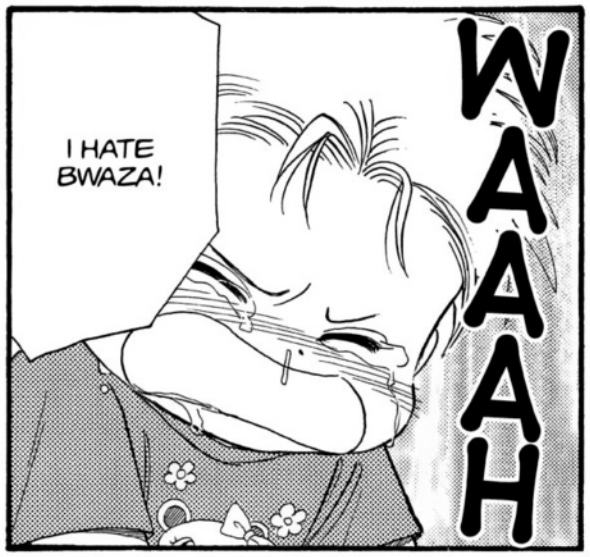
MINORU WANTS A SHIRT EXACTLY LIKE THE ONE WE THREW AWAY.
HAPPY BEAR

MINORU!
WUMP
COFFE Pei

UBB...
UBB...

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO RIGHT NOW!
MINORU, THE STORES HERE DON'T HAVE IT!


WHAT?
AH!
WAAAH
WAAAH
Soba Noodles SARASHINA


I HATE BWAZA!
WAAAH

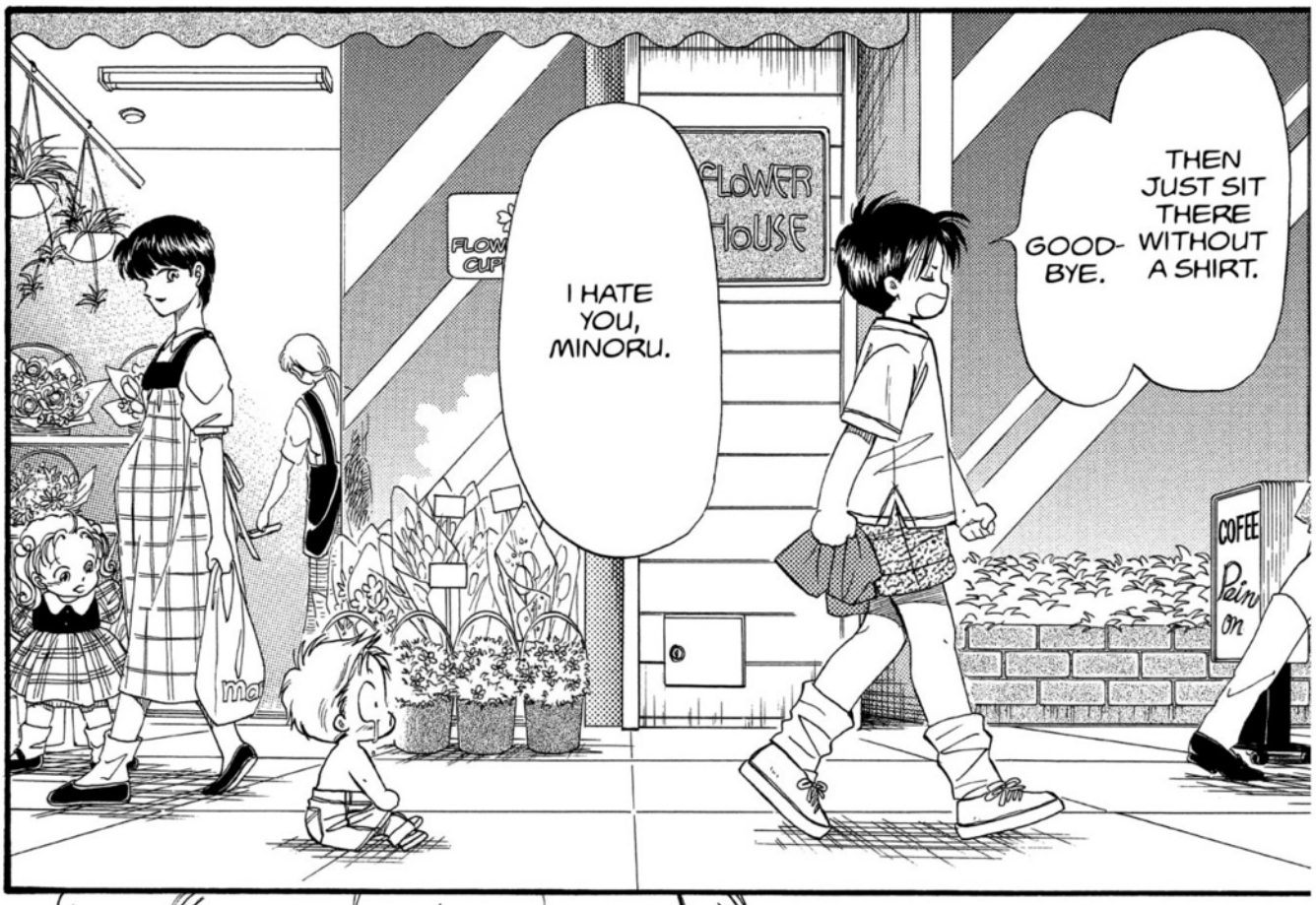
!
AAAH

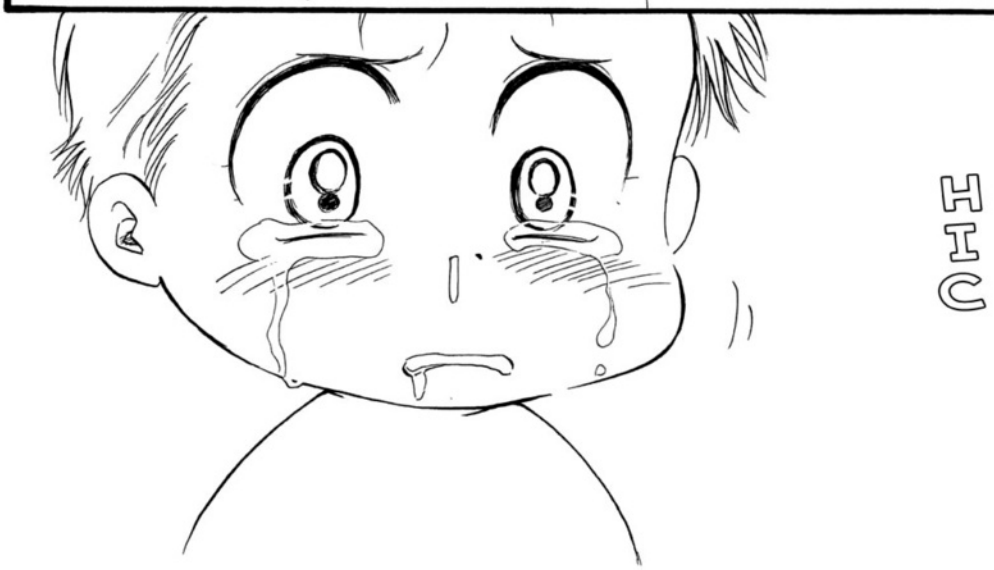
...
WAAAH
DUMMY!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
WHY...
...IS HE BEING SUCH A BRAT?
GAH
UGAH
BLUB
BLUB
...HE'S DOING IT JUST TO MAKE ME MAD!
IT'S LIKE...
ZING
ZING
ZING
DAD'S WAITING FOR US!
WELL? ON OR OFF?
AGAH!
WHUP
THEN FINE!
IF YOU HATE THIS SHIRT SO MUCH, TAKE IT OFF!

FWUP
HMPH!

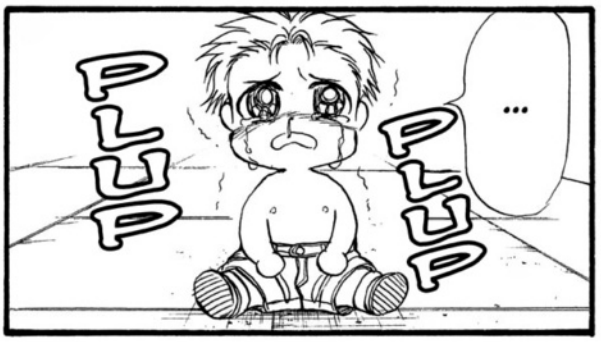
BDMP

I DON' WIKE IT.


I HATE YOU, MINORU.
GOOD-BYE.
THEN JUST SIT THERE WITHOUT A SHIRT.
FLOWER HOUSE
COFFEE

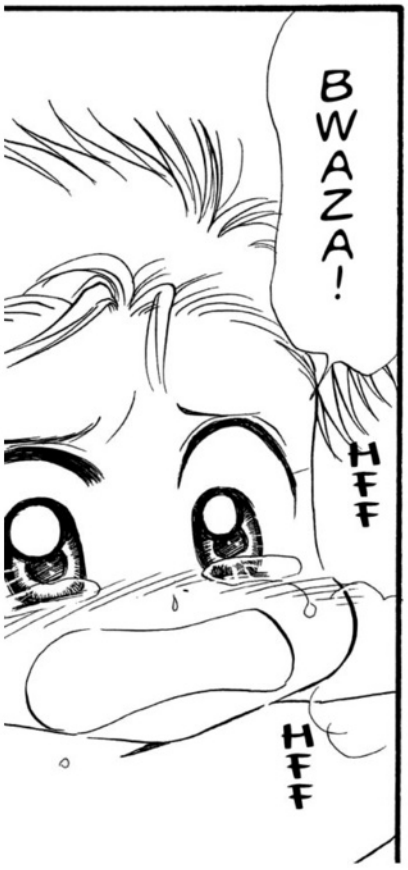

HIC

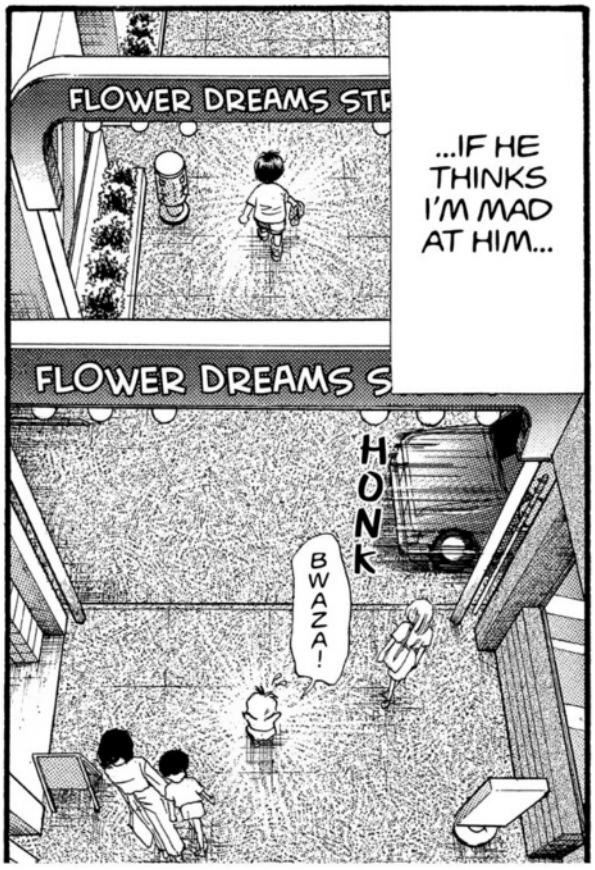
FLOWER DREAMS STREET
UBB...
TUP
UBB...
TUP


...
PLUP
PLUP

UBB...
UBB...
SWAY

...I KNOW...
BWAZA!
HMPH!
RRMMM
I'M ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE...


BWAZA!
HFF
HFF

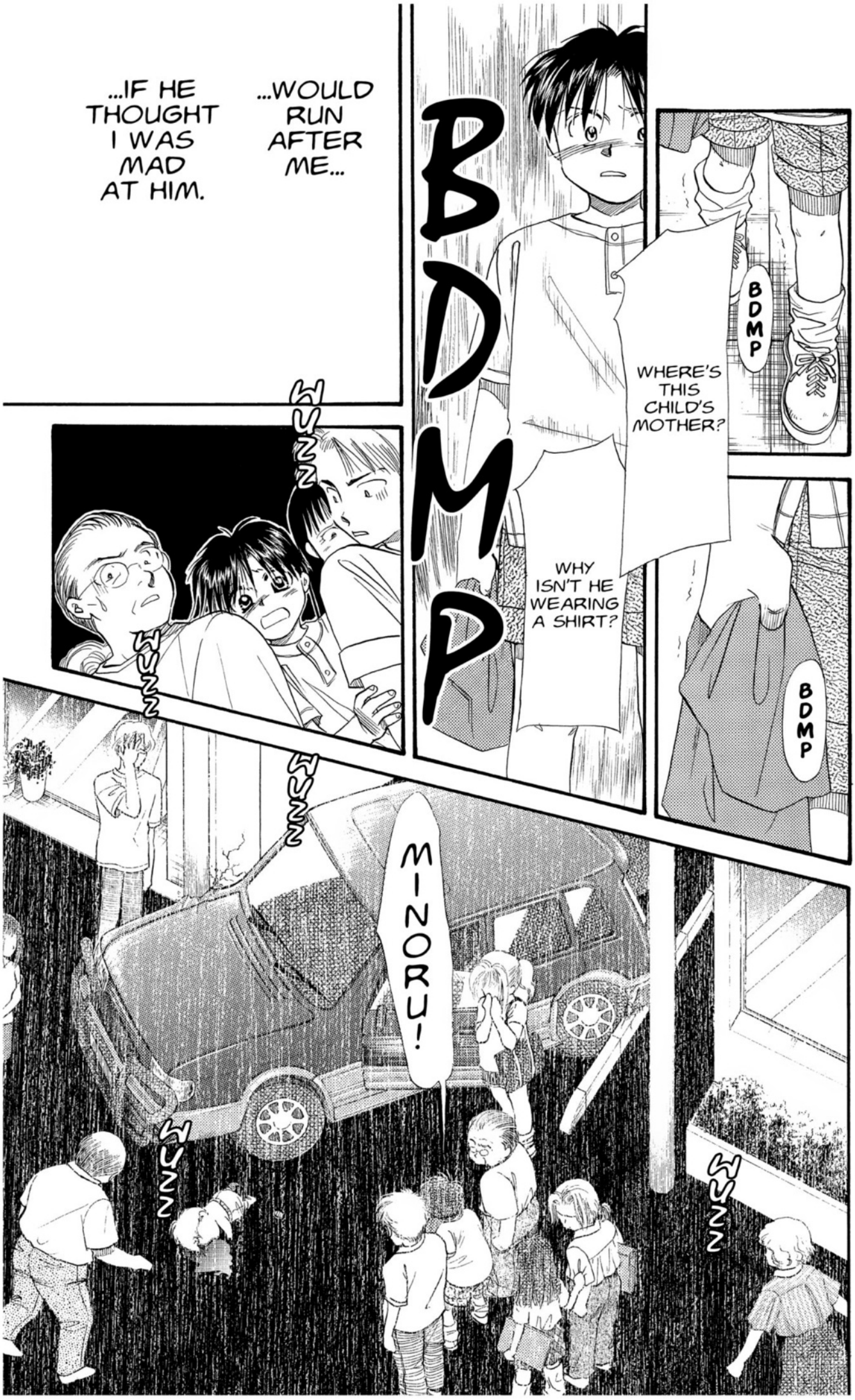

FLOWER DREAMS STR
FLOWER DREAMS S
...IF HE THINKS I'M MAD AT HIM...
HONK
BWAZA!

...MINORU WILL RUN AFTER ME...

BWAZA...

VROOM
RAGAWA DRUGSTORE
RAGAWA DRUGSTORE
STORE
TAMA 34
WA X XXX

SKRREECCH
ZANG
AAAAAH
THAT CAR JUST HIT A KID!
WORLD
SAKI
CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!
OH NO!
BDMP
NO!
SOME-BODY HELP! HURRY!
I KNEW...
...MINORU...
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP


...IF HE THOUGHT I WAS MAD AT HIM.
...WOULD RUN AFTER ME...
BDMP
BDMP
WHERE'S THIS CHILD'S MOTHER?
WHY ISN'T HE WEARING A SHIRT?
BDMP
WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
MINORU!

...SAY TO HIM?

WHAT DID I...

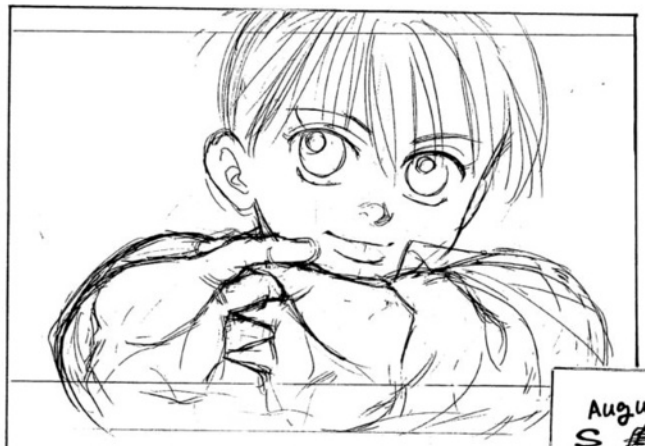
Chapter 102 / The End

BONUS SKETCH GALLERY

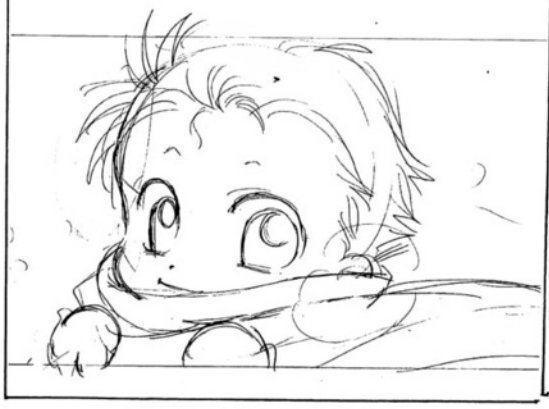
I've thrown out or given away most of my sketches, so I actually have fewer of these than I have of finished artwork.

Cover illustration for *Flowers & Dreams*, 1997.

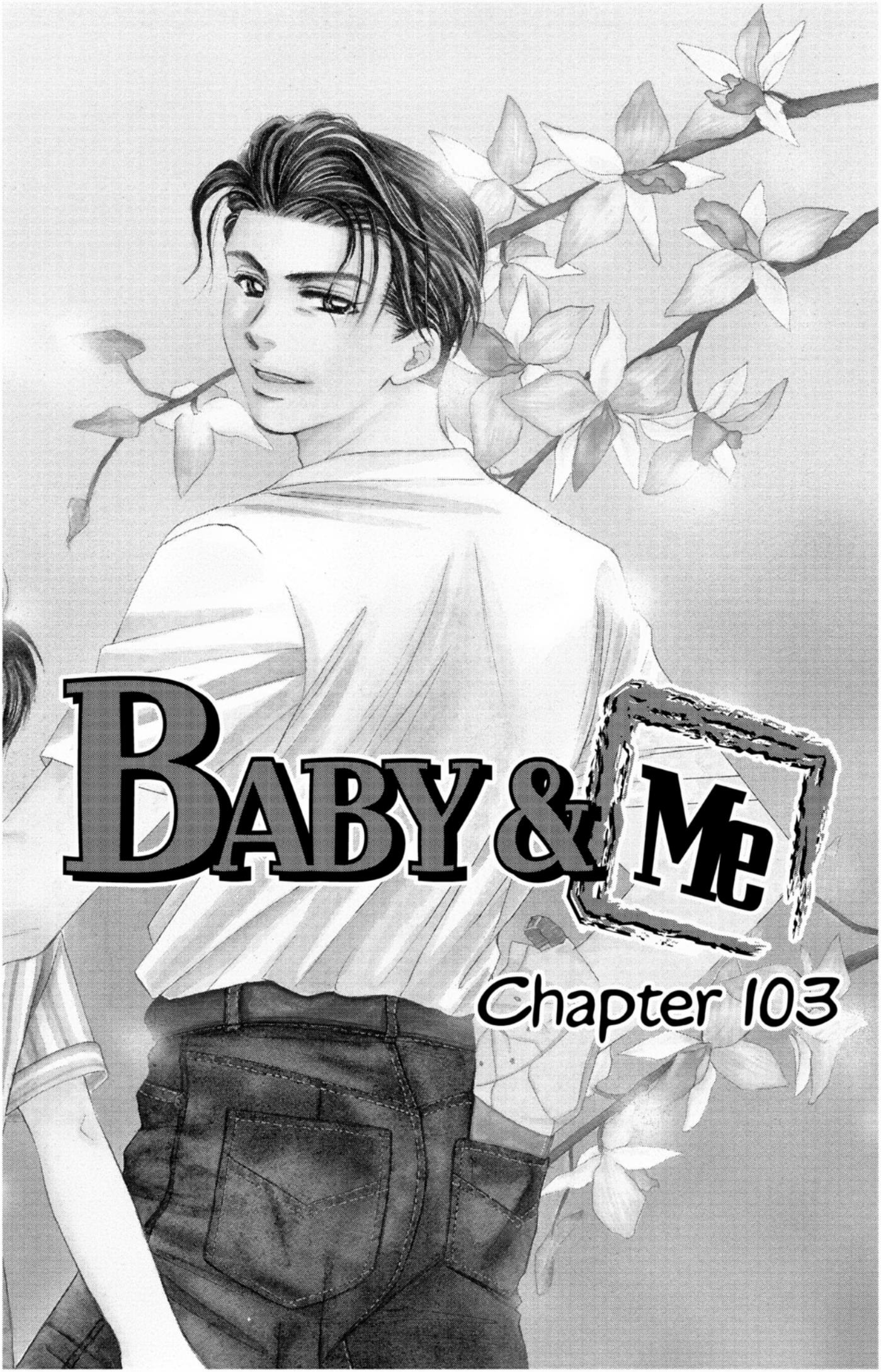
For the title page of Chapter 87, 1996.



For the cover of the 1997 *Baby & Me* calendar.



These two were drawn for people I know. They're not colored.


BABY & Me
Chapter 103

GOODBYE.
TUNK
KLANK
I HATE YOU, MINORU.
THAT'S...
...WHAT I SAID.

I HATE YOU, MINORU.
I TOLD HIM...
...I HATED HIM.
SOB
SOB
I HATE YOU.
IT MUST'VE HURT SO BAD.
HE WAS SOBBING.
BE-CAUSE ...
OPERATION DEPARTMENT
TMP TMP
THERE WAS SO MUCH BLOOD.
BEEP
BEEP
46
126/12
41

BEEP
BEEP
...I SAID THAT HORRIBLE THING TO HIM.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
HFF
TAKUYA.
HFF
...

A POLICE OFFICER...
...SHOWED UP AT THE OFFICE.
HFF
HFF
WHAT HAPPENED?
I'M WITH THE POLICE. I'D LIKE TO EXPLAIN HOW THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED. IS IT OKAY?
OKAY.
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.
Y-YES, I AM.
DAD!
ARE YOU HIS FATHER?
...BUT HE'S HERE IN THE LOBBY AND WANTS TO SPEAK WITH YOU, IF YOU'RE WILLING.
THE DRIVER IS VERY DIS-TRAUGHT ...
OPERATION DEPARTMENT ENTRANCE

IT WAS...
...MY FAULT.
...
TAKUYA?
HE RAN AFTER ME...

TAKUYA!
IT...
YOU DIDN'T KNOW THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, TAKUYA!
IT'S MY FAULT!
...BECAUSE I SAID I WAS GONNA LEAVE HIM!
IT'S ALL MY FAULT!

"MINORU IS FIGHTING HARD."

THAT'S WHAT A DOCTOR TOLD ME AFTER IT WAS OVER.

...THEY OPERATED ON MINORU.

FOR FIVE HOURS AND 32 MINUTES...

HE'S IN A COMA. HIS CONDI-TION IS CRITICAL.

HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT, AND HE'S WEAK RIGHT NOW.

...BUT THERE WAS HEMOR-RHAGING IN HIS BRAIN.

HE BROKE HIS LEFT ARM AND LOST A LOT OF BLOOD DUE TO INTERNAL INJURIES. WE STITCHED UP THE WOUND ON HIS HEAD...

WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING FOR SURE YET.

BUT IF HE DOESN'T REGAIN CONSCIOUS-NESS BY THEN, I'M AFRAID...

WE'LL KNOW MORE IN A FEW DAYS.

...

YOU MEAN... HE COULD DIE?

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
SO MANY ...
...TUBES AND WIRES.
I CAN'T CONCEN-TRATE ON ANYTHING.
I CAN'T THINK.
TOKYO KAGAWA HOSPITAL
I'M SORRY, MINORU.
BEEP
I'VE CRIED SO MUCH...
...MY HEAD HURTS.
BEEP

IS THE PERSON SITTING HERE ...
...REALLY ME?
FOR SOME REASON I FEEL COLD.
KREEK
BUT MAYBE ...
...IN REALITY ...
...WE'RE NEVER FAR FROM DISASTER EVEN WHEN WE'RE HAPPY.
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING YOU SEE ON TV.
IT DOESN'T SEEM REAL.
IS THIS A DREAM?
MY FINGERS WON'T MOVE. THEY'RE NUMB.
BWAZA. ♡

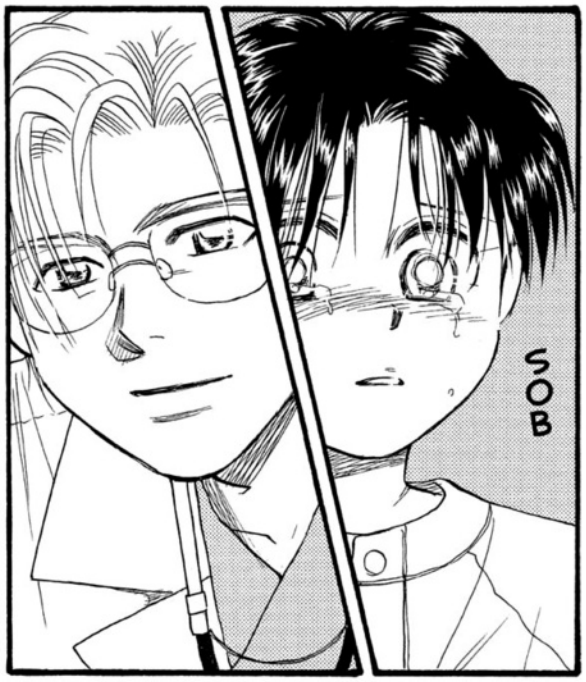
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.
HEY ...
HEE HEE HEE!
I WUV YOU, BWAZA! ♡
TUP TUP TUP
MINORU?
I WUV YOU...
ZANG
WOOO
WAS IT A DREAM?
PLUP

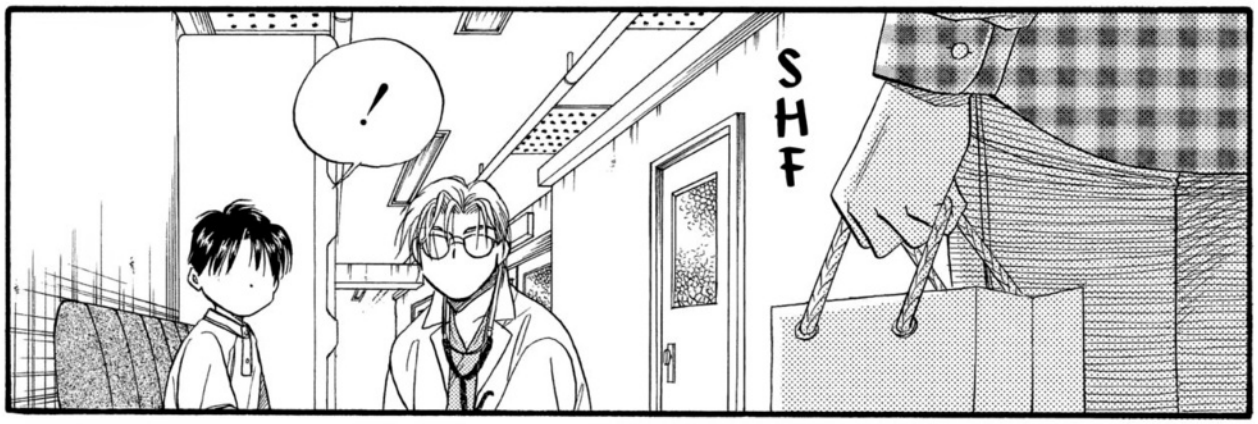
...
IT'S SO QUIET. I WONDER WHAT TIME IT IS.
WHERE'S DAD?
TMP
OH YEAH. HE WENT HOME TO GET A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR ME.
HE SAID HE'D BE RIGHT BACK.
ARE YOU... ...ALL RIGHT?
YOU SHOULD GET SOME SLEEP.
THERE ARE BEDS HERE FOR THE FAMILIES OF PATIENTS.
WHO'S HE?
HE SOUNDS NICE.
I'M ONE OF THE ICU DOCTORS HERE. I'M LOOKING AFTER YOUR LITTLE BROTHER.
I CAN'T SLEEP.
WE'LL WATCH OVER MINORU FOR YOU. YOU NEED TO REST.
BUT... I'M WAITING FOR MY DAD.

TAKUYA ...
...WILL YOU TRUST ME?
YOUR HAND IS SO COLD.
I KNOW YOU'RE WOR-RIED.
HAVE HOPE.
MINORU'S STILL FIGHTING HARD.
...IT MAKES IT THAT MUCH HARDER ON EVERYBODY ELSE.
IF YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELF...

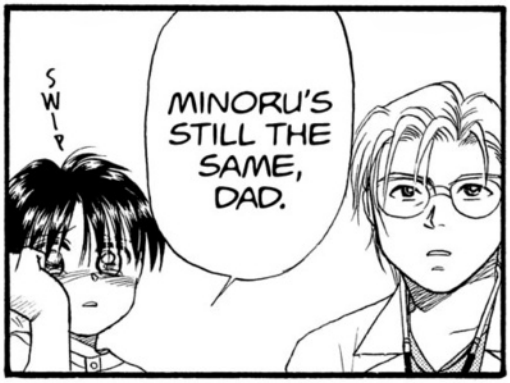
I HAVE AN UN-USUAL NAME.
YES.
DR. YUKI... ASAHI?
SNIFF

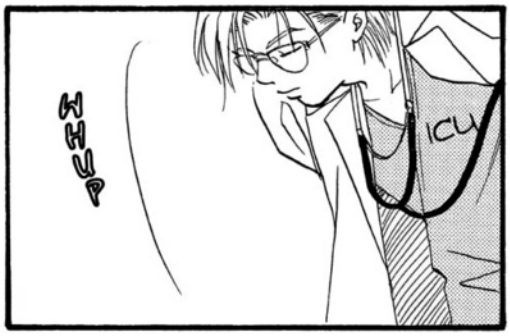
Dr. Yuki Asahi


SOB

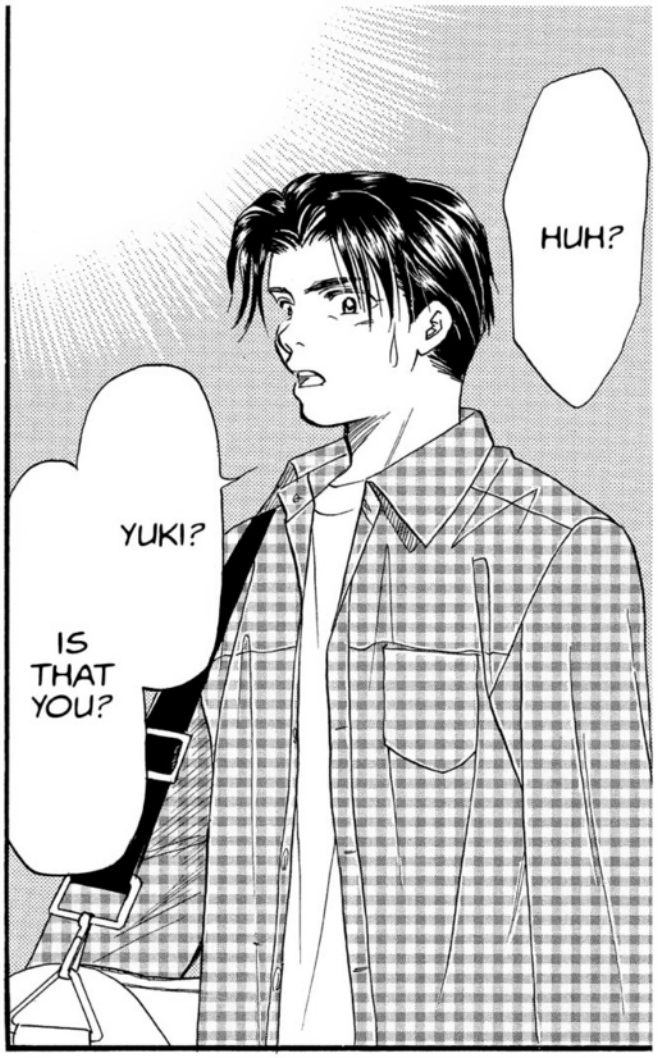

!
SHF

...


SWIP
MINORU'S STILL THE SAME, DAD.

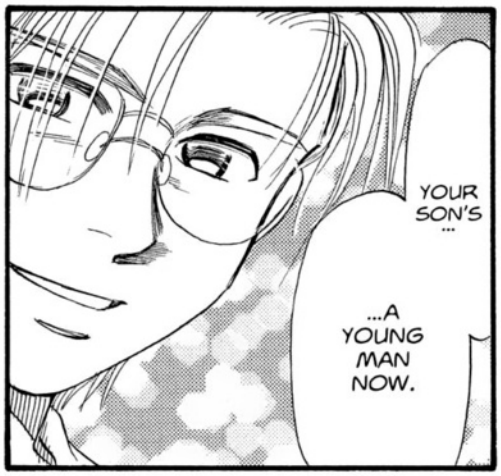

WHUP

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...
...HARUMI.
Dr. Yuki Asahi


HUH?
YUKI?
IS THAT YOU?

I GUESS WE'RE GETTING OLD.
IT'S AMAZING.
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE YUKAKO.

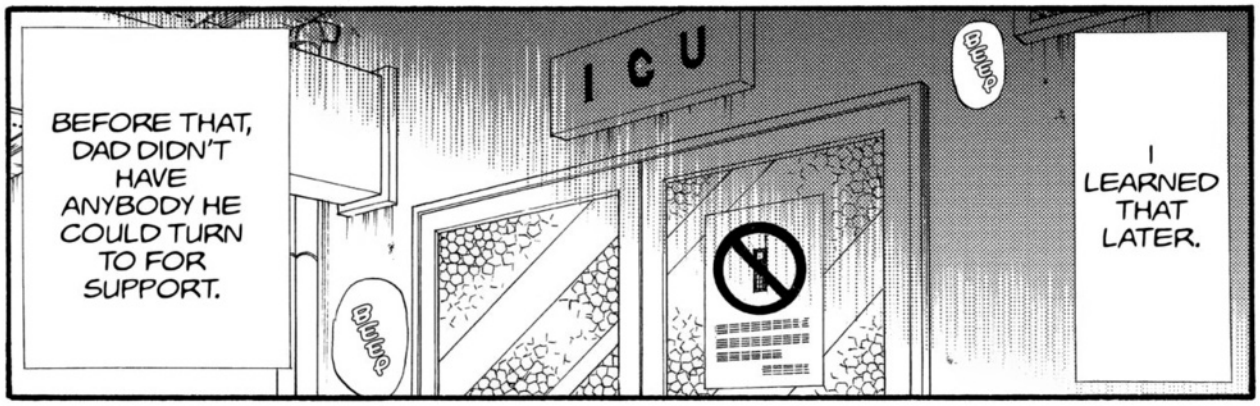
...


YOUR SON'S ...
...A YOUNG MAN NOW.

HAVING DR. ASAHI THERE WITH US...
...WAS A BIG COMFORT TO DAD.
...

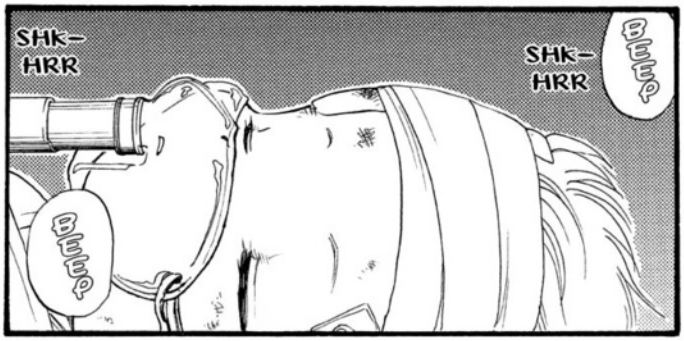
YES.
YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE COLLEGE. I MET YOU WHEN YOU WERE JUST A BABY.

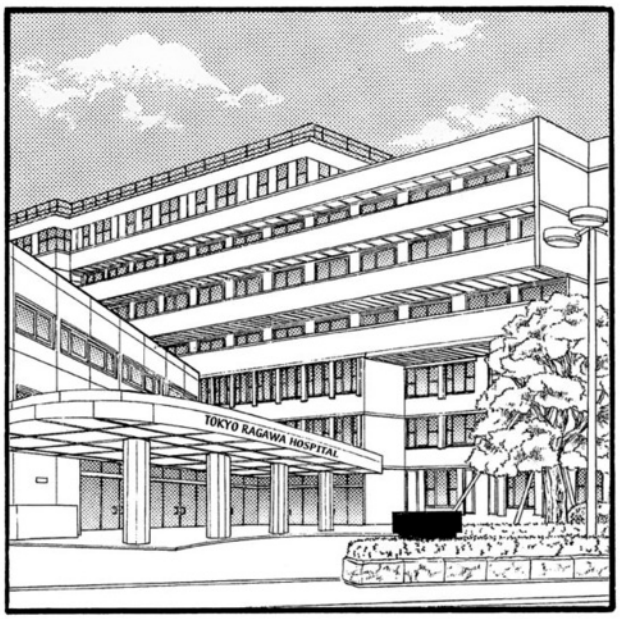
...
YOU KNEW MY MOM?


BEFORE THAT, DAD DIDN'T HAVE ANYBODY HE COULD TURN TO FOR SUPPORT.
ICU
Bleep
Bleep
I LEARNED THAT LATER.

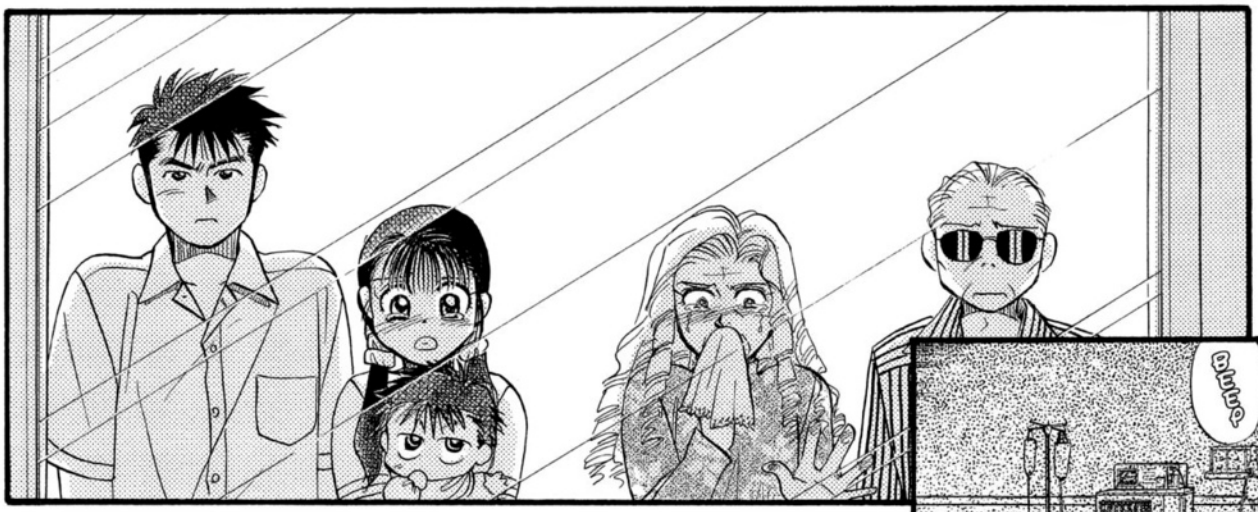
HE'S SO PALE.
MINORU, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

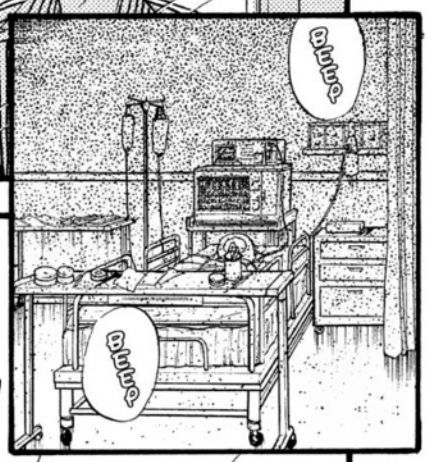
MINORU ...
Bleep
Bleep


SHK-HRR
SHK-HRR
Bleep
Bleep


TOKYO RAGAWA HOSPITAL

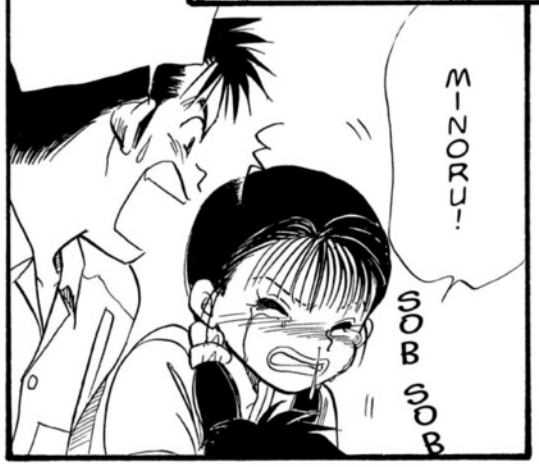
...
Bbbbp
Bbbbp
WHEN YOU'RE ALL BETTER, I'LL TAKE YOU TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK, OKAY?
SO KEEP FIGHTING.




Bbbbp
Bbbbp

ALL THOSE TUBES AND WIRES!
WHAT? NOW I'M CRYING TOO!
PLUP
PLUP

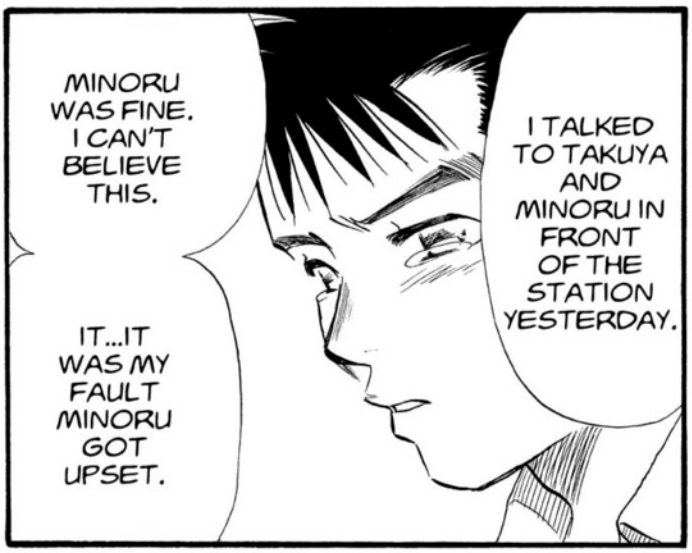
MINORU'S GONNA BE FINE!
PLUP


CUT IT OUT, TOMOKO!
MINORU!
SOB SOB

IF ANYONE COMES BY YOUR HOUSE, WE'LL TELL THEM WHERE YOU ARE.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU, JUST LET US KNOW, OKAY?
OH. THANK YOU.

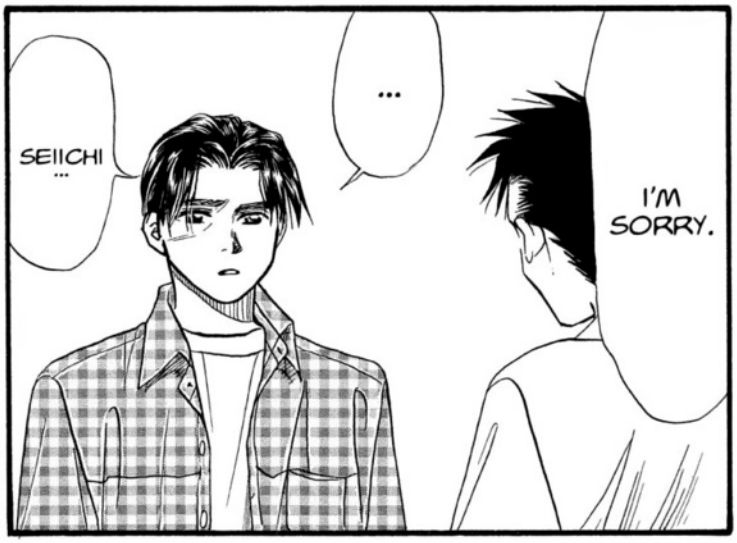
YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR STRENGTH UP.
HARUMI, I MADE YOU AND TAKUYA THIS BOXED LUNCH.

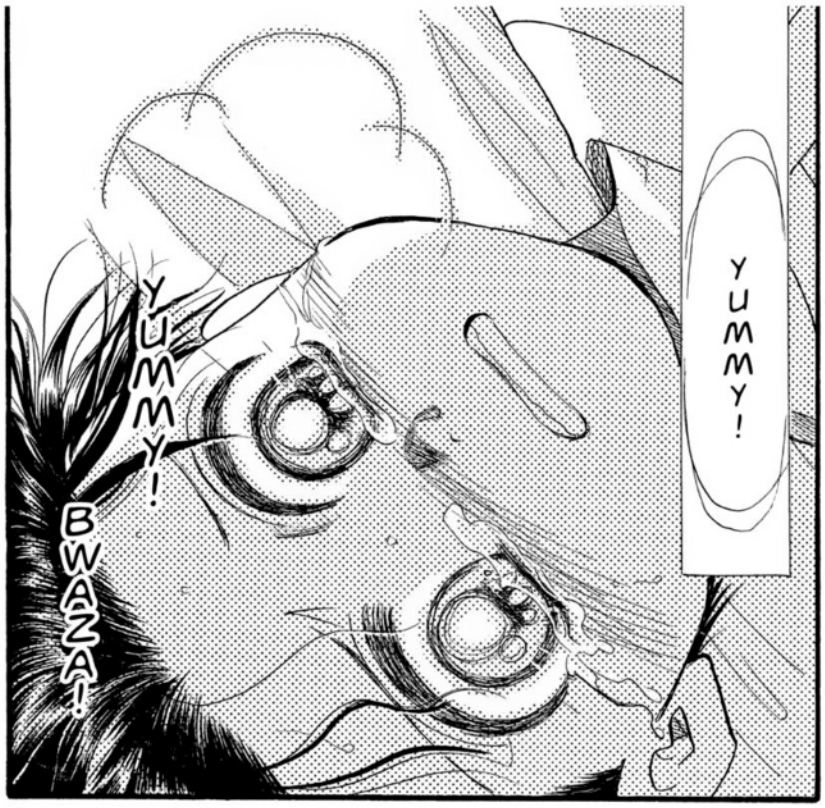
Cobbo
Cobbo
Cobbo


MINORU WAS FINE. I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.
IT...IT WAS MY FAULT MINORU GOT UPSET.
I TALKED TO TAKUYA AND MINORU IN FRONT OF THE STATION YESTERDAY.

I MADE HIM TAKE A NAP.
WHAT'S TAKUYA DOING?
OH.

...IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS, PEOPLE TEND TO BLAME THEMSELVES.


SEIICHI ...
...
I'M SORRY.


YUMMY!
YUMMY!
BWAZA!

TAKUYA, WHAT'S WRONG?
SNIFF
Sigh
CAN'T YOU SLEEP?

I KEEP THINKING TERRIBLE THOUGHTS.
WHAT IF MINORU STAYS LIKE THIS AND...

MINORU... MINORU!
Hic
DON'T WORRY. MINORU'S GOING TO BE FINE.
SNIFF

WHY DID I SAY THAT?
WHY DIDN'T I DO MORE FOR HIM?
WHY DIDN'T I LISTEN TO HIM?
WISTEN! MINOWU ...
...WIKE CHOC'-WATE!
MINOWU WIKE EGGS!

Author's Note Part 6

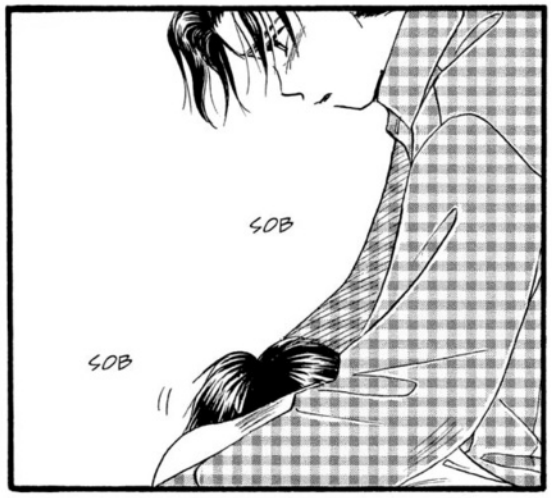
This is my last note of the series. Having done my best to the very end, I'd like for you guys to say, "Thanks for all your hard work," not, "Why is it ending? Give us a sequel!"

Right now I'm physically run down. I just want to catch my breath and get started on a new project.

There's one thing I'd like to make an excuse about. Takuya looks a little chubby in his school uniform, but that's just because it's the wrong size for him. Thank you for understanding.

Anyway, thank you so much for six wonderful years! See you in my next work!
So until then, goodbye!

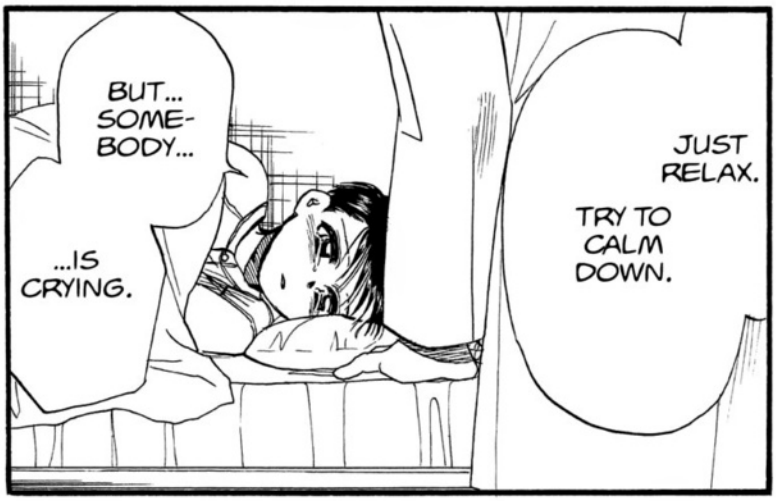
Marimo 8/3/1997
Drawn while I was watching the Olympics in Athens.

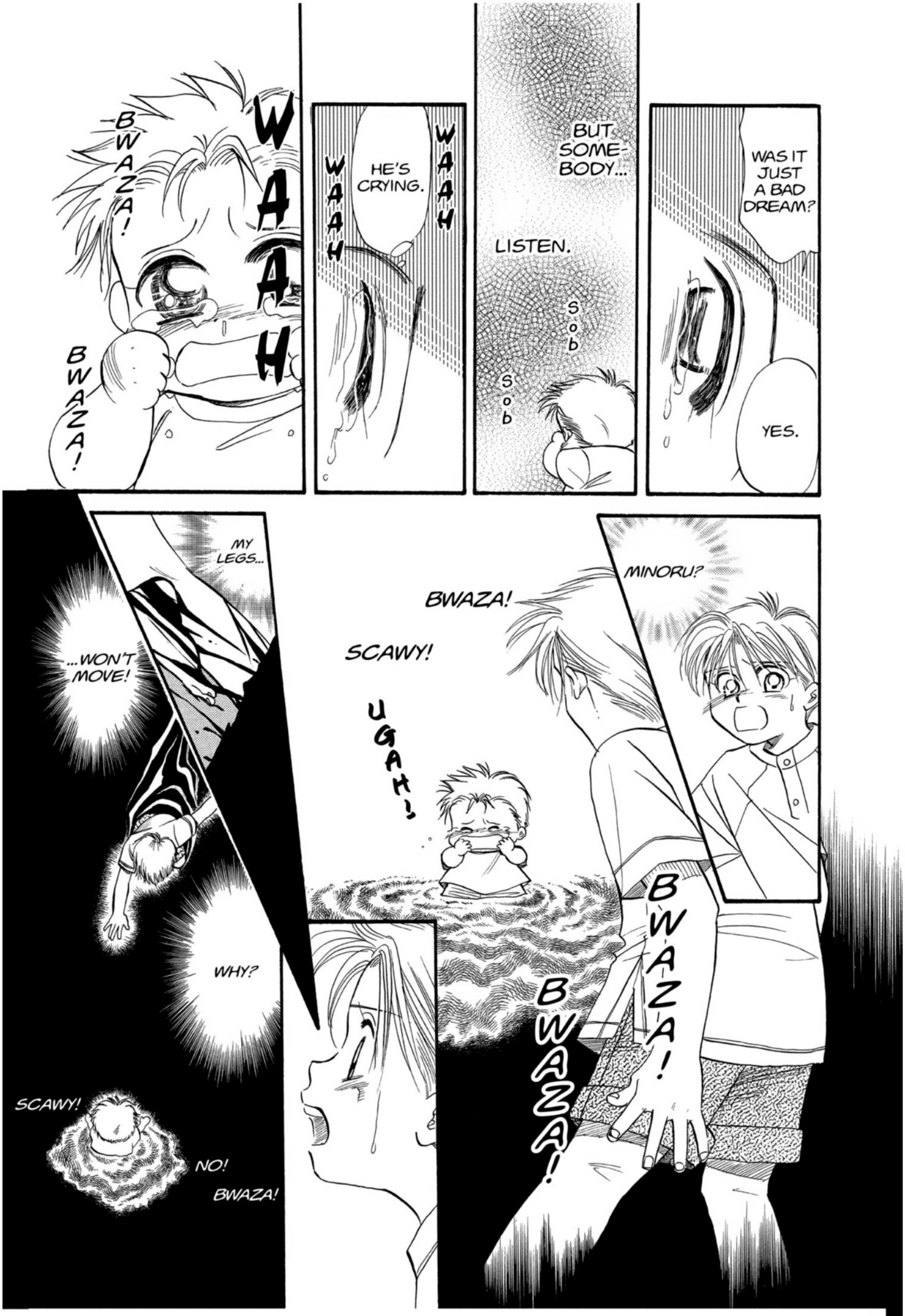


AFTER TWO DAYS...
...MINORU STILL HADN'T REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
MOM... DAD...
YUKAKO...
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TAKE THIS.

SOB
SOB
SOB
HUH?
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

IT'S JUST YOUR IMAGINATION.


BUT... SOMEBODY...
...IS CRYING.
JUST RELAX.
TRY TO CALM DOWN.


WAAH
BWAZA!
BWAZA!
WAAH
WAAH
HE'S CRYING.
BUT SOME-BODY...
LISTEN.
Sob
Sob
WAS IT JUST A BAD DREAM?
YES.
MY LEGS...
...WON'T MOVE!
WHY?
SCAWY!
NO!
BWAZA!
BWAZA!
SCAWY!
UGAH!
MINORU?
BWAZA!
BWAZA!

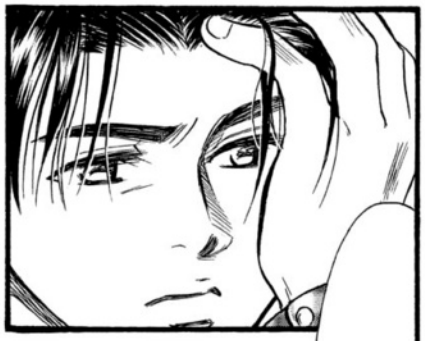
MINORU! PLEASE!
LET ME GO TO HIM!
BWAZA!
IF I DON'T...
...I...
WHUP
SWAK
WOOSH

MINORU!
PLIP
PLIP
UNH ...
SOB
HUH? UH... YEAH. HOW'S TAKUYA?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?
I GAVE HIM A SEDATIVE TO CALM HIM DOWN.
HARUMI ...
...I'M ON MY BREAK NOW...
...SO IF YOU NEED TO TALK...
?

TALK?
YOU'RE THE SAME AS EVER. YOU TAKE CARE OF EVERYBODY BUT YOURSELF.
YOU SHOULD TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS. IT'S NOT GOOD TO KEEP IT ALL BOTTLED UP.
I'LL BE GLAD TO LISTEN.

BUT I HAVE TO BE STRONG.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE.

HEH... IT'S EMBARRASSING. I'M SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF MY KIDS, BUT... I'M SO SCARED.
DADS ARE ONLY HUMAN. THEY'RE NOT SUPER-MEN.



...
YUKI...

...

MAYBE THIS IS YOUR CHANCE.

DO YOU BELIEVE ...
...IN FATE?
WHY DO THESE THINGS KEEP HAPPEN-ING?
WHY?
FIRST YUKAKO'S PARENTS DIED IN A PLANE CRASH.
THEN MY PARENTS WERE KILLED IN A CAR WRECK... AND THEN YUKAKO WAS TOO.
AND NOW IT'S MINORU!
I CAN'T ...
I CAN'T TAKE IT!
I CAN'T STAND THIS FEELING!
I'M SO SCARED!
I KEEP THINK-ING...
...WHAT IF TAKUYA'S NEXT? I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY CHILDREN!

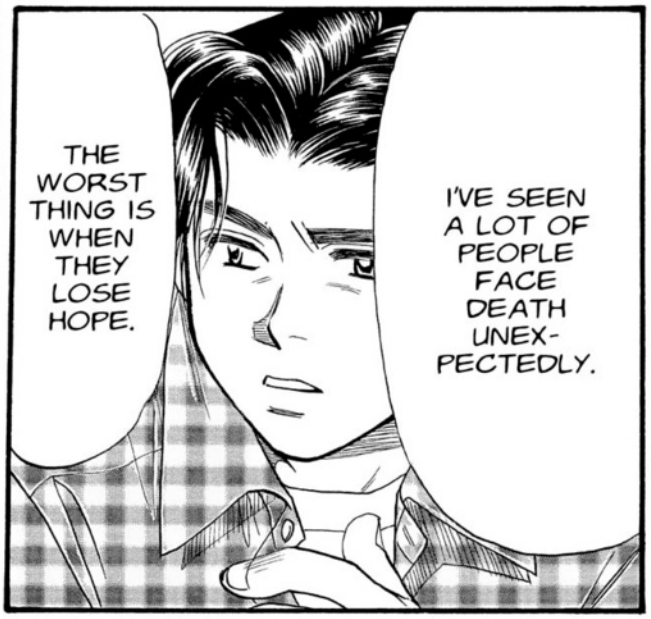
BUT I BELIEVE WE MAKE OUR OWN DESTINIES.

I DON'T KNOW, HARUMI.
I DON'T KNOW IF FATE EXISTS.

SIGH...

...THEN ALL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE IS DEVOTED TO RESISTING IT.
IF THERE IS SUCH A THING AS FATE...
TRIALS LIKE THIS ARE PART OF BEING HUMAN.

I ALWAYS TELL THEM...
...HOLD ON TO YOUR LIFE.
IF YOU WANT TO LIVE, FIGHT TO THE VERY END.


THE WORST THING IS WHEN THEY LOSE HOPE.
I'VE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE FACE DEATH UNEXPECTEDLY.

I DON'T WANT ANYONE TELLING ME WHAT MY FUTURE HOLDS.

I INTEND TO MAKE IT FOR MYSELF...

...AND KEEP FIGHTING TO THE END.

THINK OF THE KANJI CHARACTERS THAT MAKE UP "FATE."

THEY MEAN "CARRY" AND "LIFE."

ICU

I'M DOING MY BEST FOR MINORU BECAUSE I'M A DOCTOR...

...NOT BECAUSE HE'S THE CHILD OF A DEAR FRIEND.

IF YOU WANT TO LIVE...

...FIGHT...

...

...TO THE VERY END.

TMP

THINK ABOUT WHAT I SAID, HARUMI!

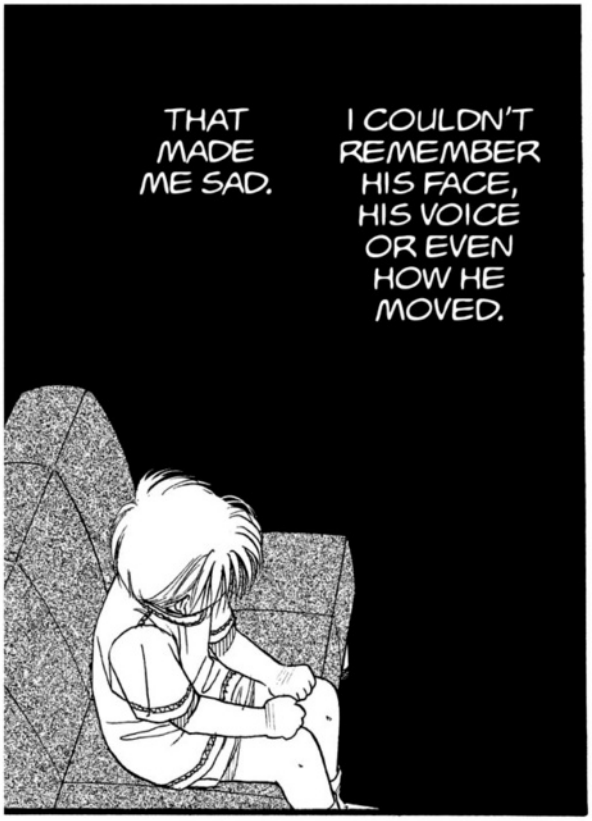
BEEP BEEP

SORRY. I'VE GOT AN EMERGENCY.

AND ONE MORE THING.

KEEP...
...FIGHT-ING.
CHEEP
CHEEP
TOKYO RAGAWA HOSPITAL
DOCTOR! THE PATIENT'S CONDI-TION IS DETERIO-RATING!
KLAK KLAK
TMP
TMP
TMP

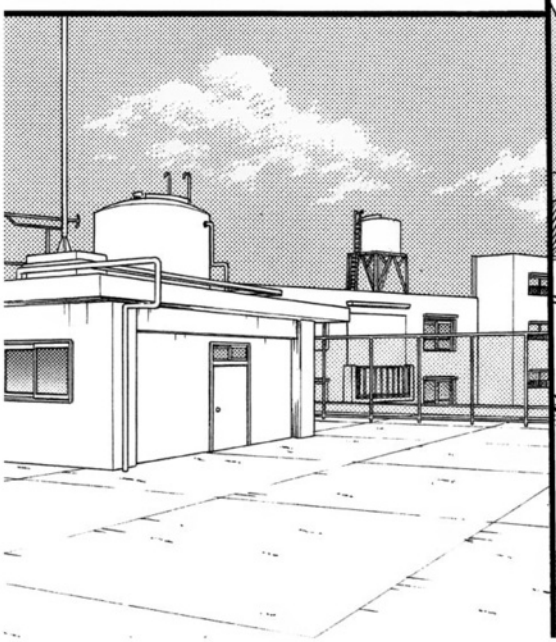
ON THE THIRD DAY...
...MINORU'S CONDI-TION GOT WORSE.
I DON'T REMEM-BER ALL THE DE-TAILS.
I SAT QUIETLY ON THE SOFA OUTSIDE THE ICU.


THAT MADE ME SAD.
I COULDN'T REMEMBER HIS FACE, HIS VOICE OR EVEN HOW HE MOVED.

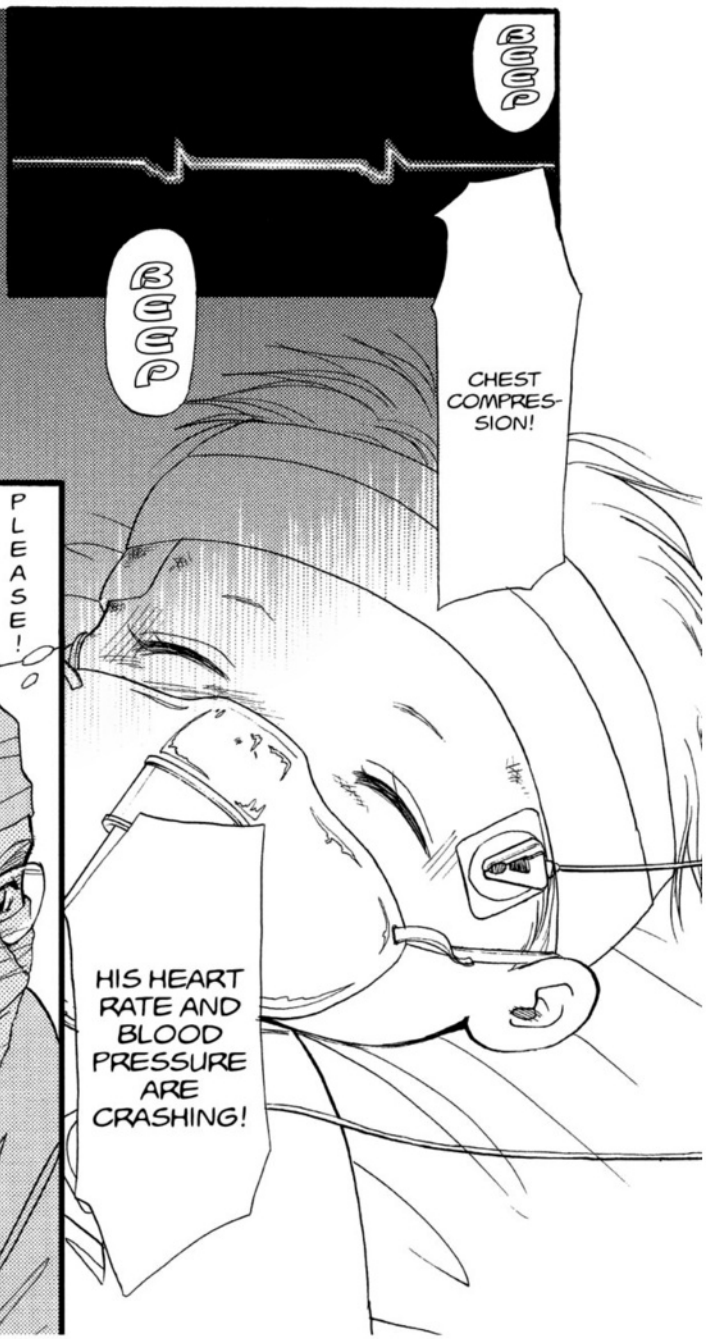
...I TRIED TO REMEM-BER MINORU'S FACE...
...BUT I COULDN'T.

PEOPLE WERE RUNNING AROUND LOOKING VERY SERIOUS.
WITH ALL THIS GOING ON...

KLAKKA
TMP TMP
PLEASE...
...LET ME REMEM-BER MINORU'S FACE.



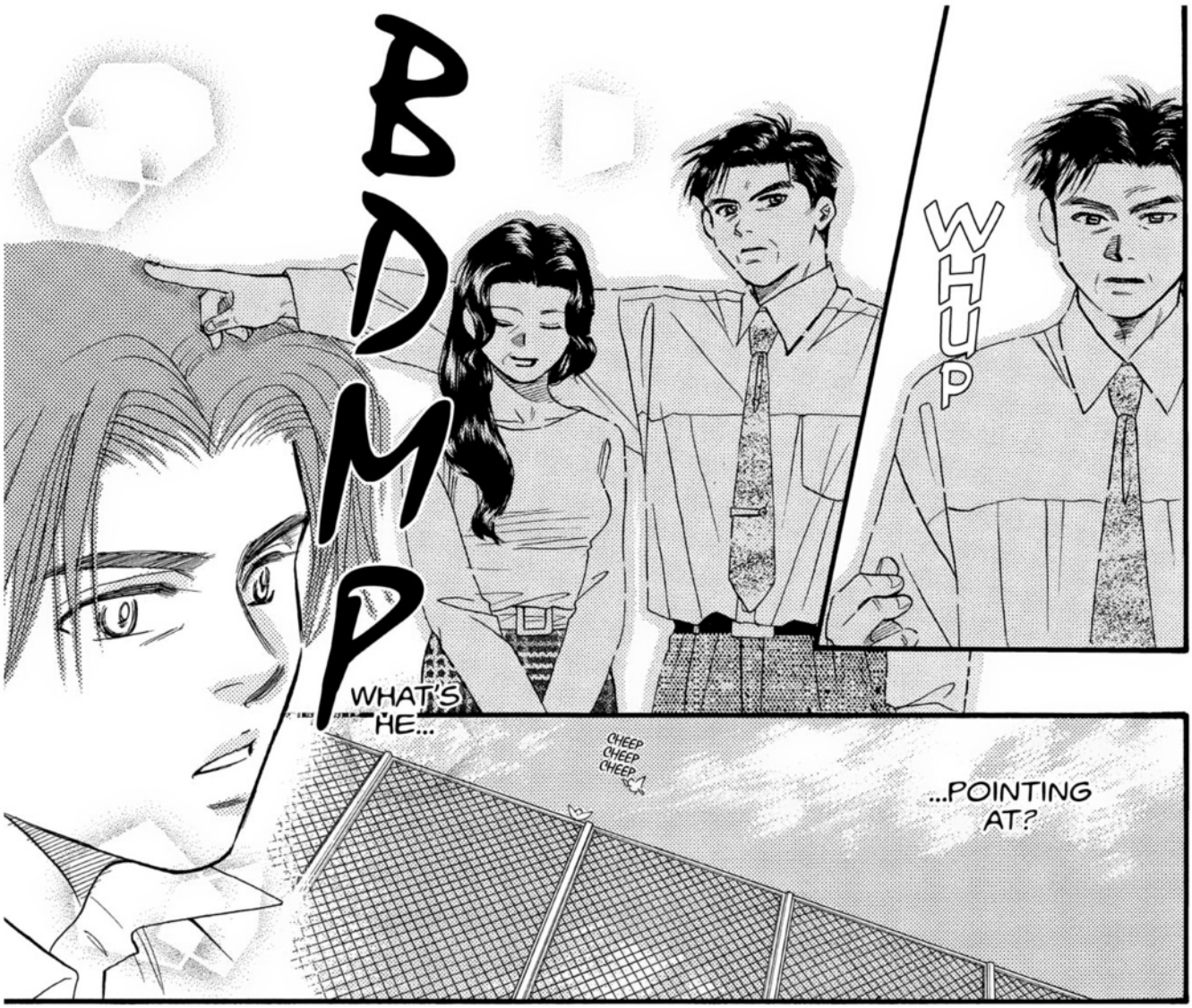
HANG IN THERE!
PLEASE!


BEEP
BEEP
CHEST COMPRES-SION!
HIS HEART RATE AND BLOOD PRESSURE ARE CRASHING!

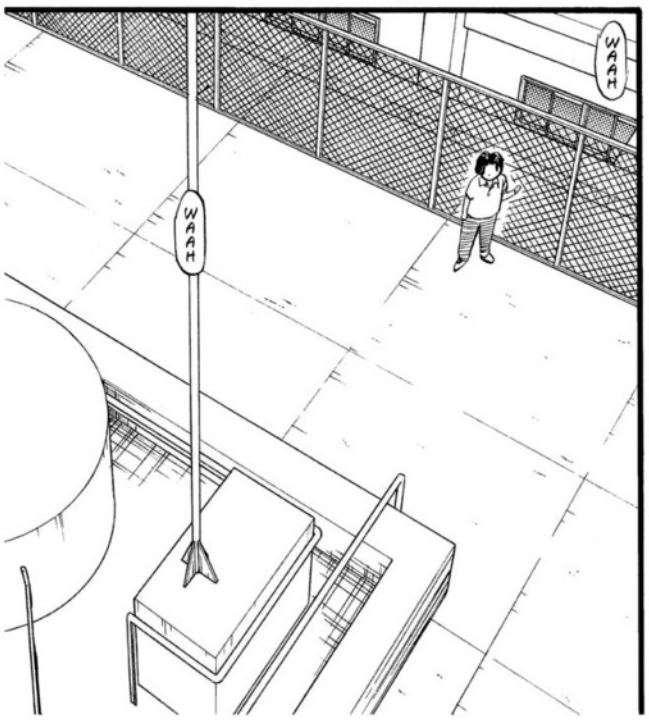
KLANK
WAAH
WAAH
...
WHAP
MINORU...
...IS ONLY 3 YEARS OLD!
HE HASN'T EVEN HAD A CHANCE TO LIVE YET!
WOOO
KREEK
KREEK
WHUP
!!
I FELT SOME-THING.
BUT...
...IT CAN'T BE.

TMP
WHUP
SWF
TMP
TMP
WAIT FOR ME!
W—
!!
YUKAKO!
TMP

MOM...
BDMP
DAD...
BDMP
BDMP
IS THIS...
BDMP
...A DREAM?
AM I SEEING THINGS?
BDMP
MOTHER.
YOU LOOK SO PEACE-FUL.
FATHER.
OH ...


BDMP
WHUP
WHAT'S HE...
CHEEP CHEEP CHEEP
...POINTING AT?

WHAT'S THERE?
CHEEP CHEEP CHEEP


WAAH
WAAH

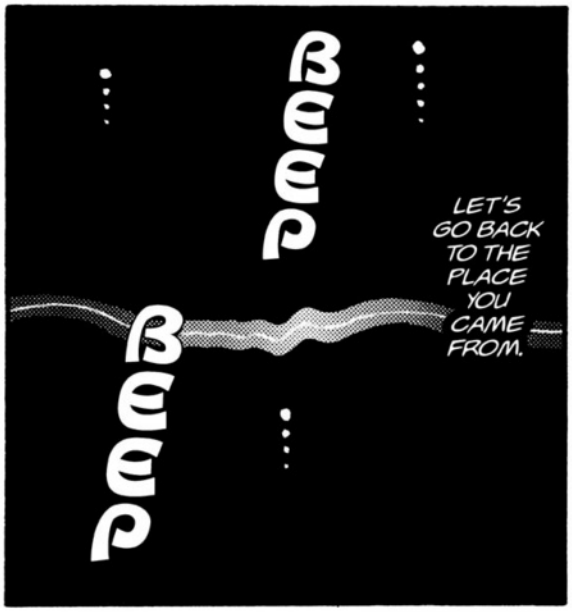
...
CHEEP
CHEEP

HE WAS POINTING TO...
...MINORU'S ROOM...
DOCTOR! HE'S NOT BREATHING!
BEEP
BEEP
OXYGEN!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

BEEP
BWAZA?
DADDY?
WHERE?
!!
HIC
SOB
MINOWU...
...DON' WIKE TO BE AWONE.
HIC

TAKUYA.
...YA.
TUP TUP TUP TUP
AH!
WOOSH
MOM?
TAKUYA.

THIS IS YOUR LITTLE BROTHER MINORU.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM, OKAY?
TAKUYA, YOU'RE A BIG BROTHER NOW.
HFFF
HFFF
HFFF
HUH?
NO, HONEY.
THAT'S THE WRONG WAY.
HFFF
BWAZA!
SW
UFF
HFFF
GOOD-BYE.
HFFF
I HATE YOU, MINORU.


BEEP
BEEP
LET'S GO BACK TO THE PLACE YOU CAME FROM.

DON'T WORRY.
I'M WITH YOU NOW.

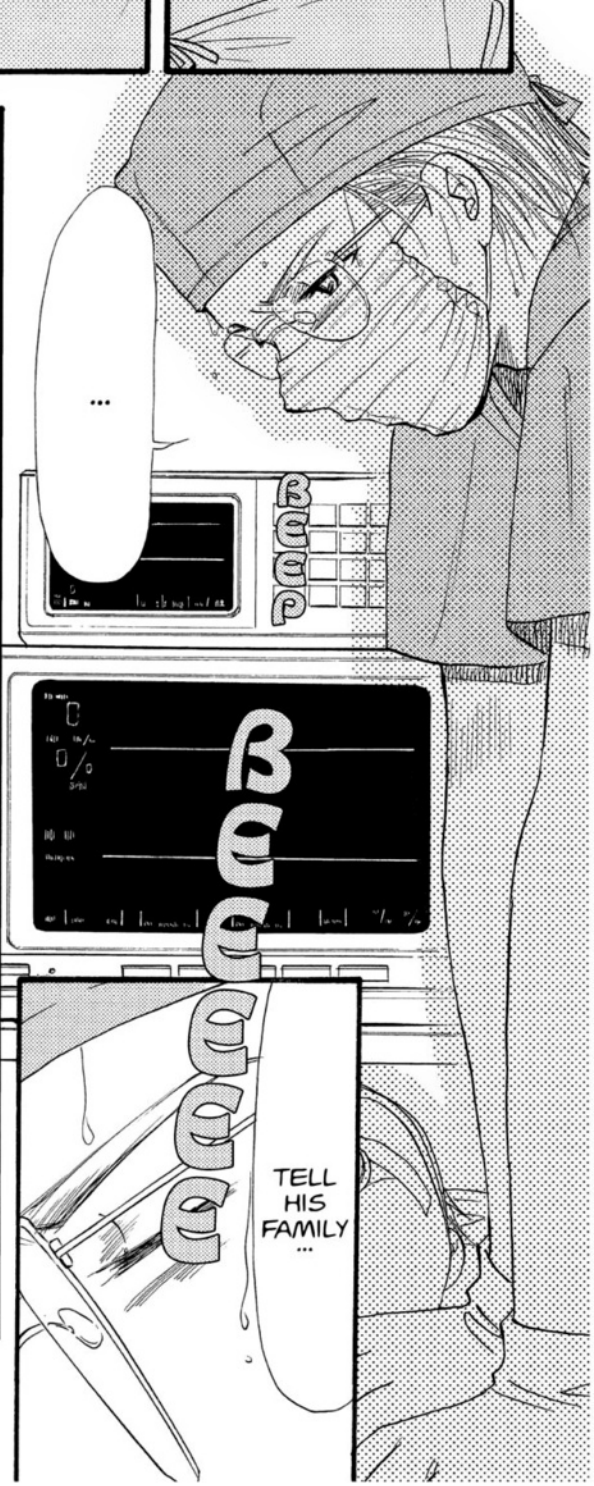
BLUB...

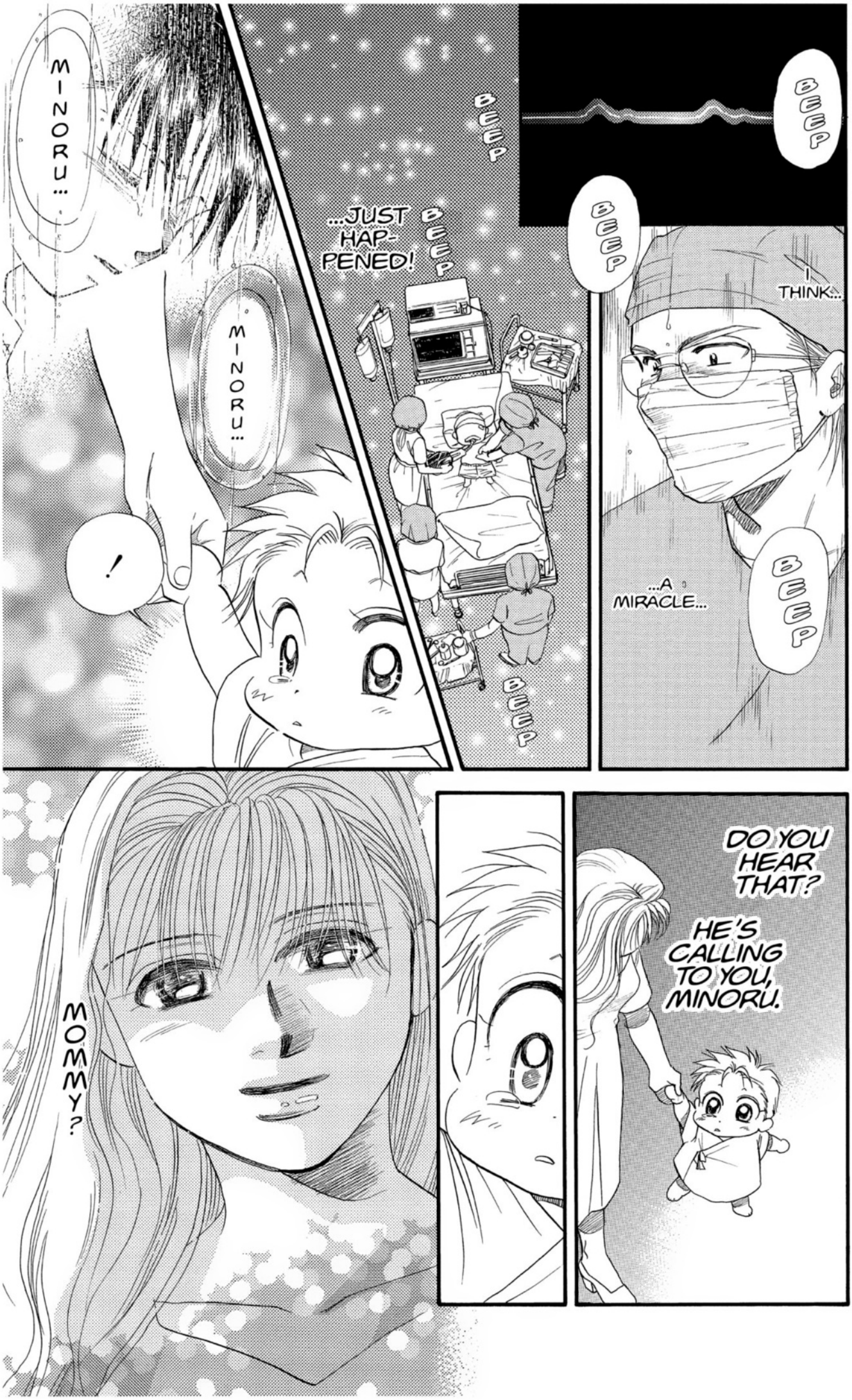
BEEP
...TO COME IN.

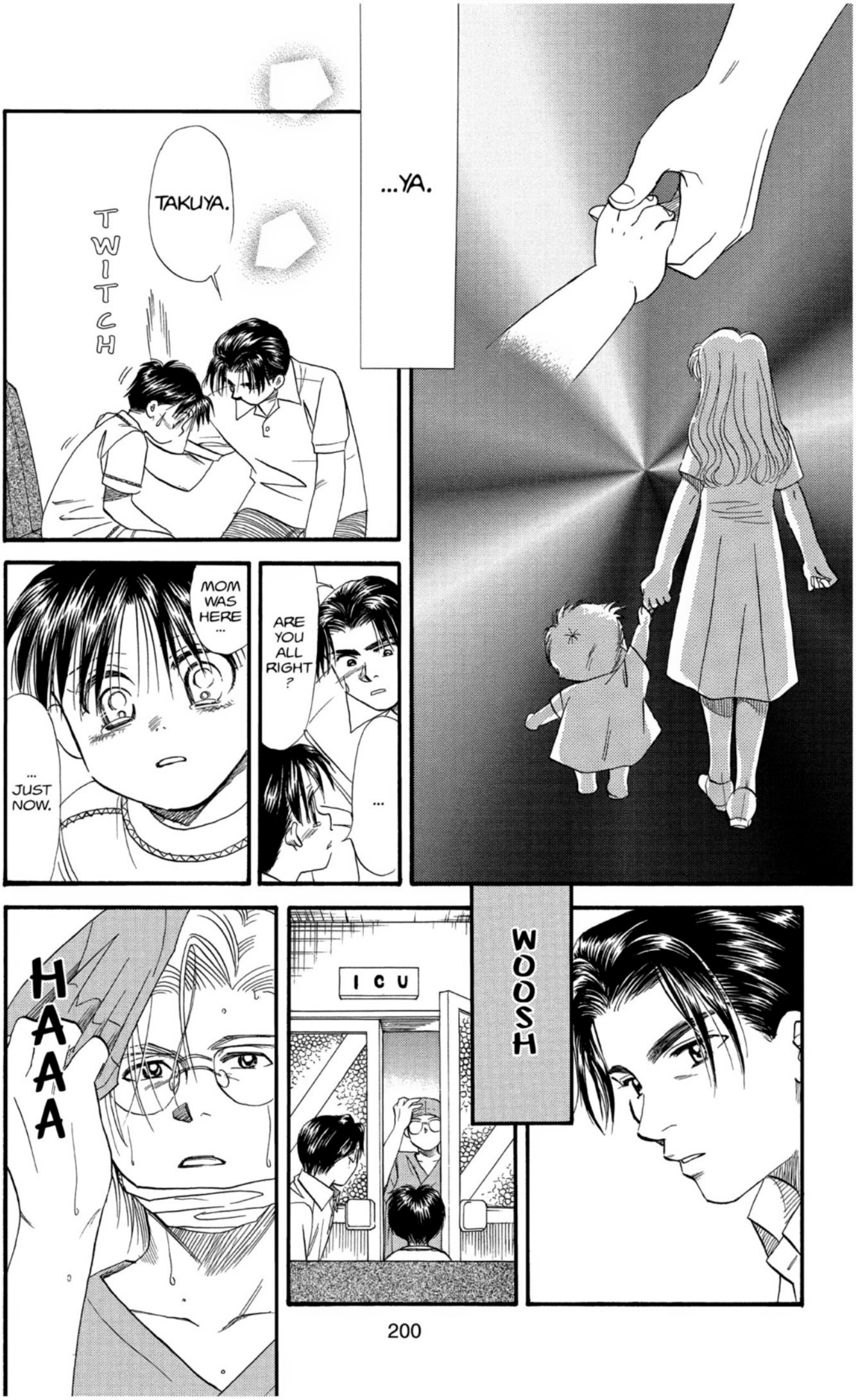
BEEP
BEEP

LOOK.
IT'S GETTING BRIGHTER.

BEEP
BEEP


...
BEEP
BEEEEEEE
TELL HIS FAMILY...

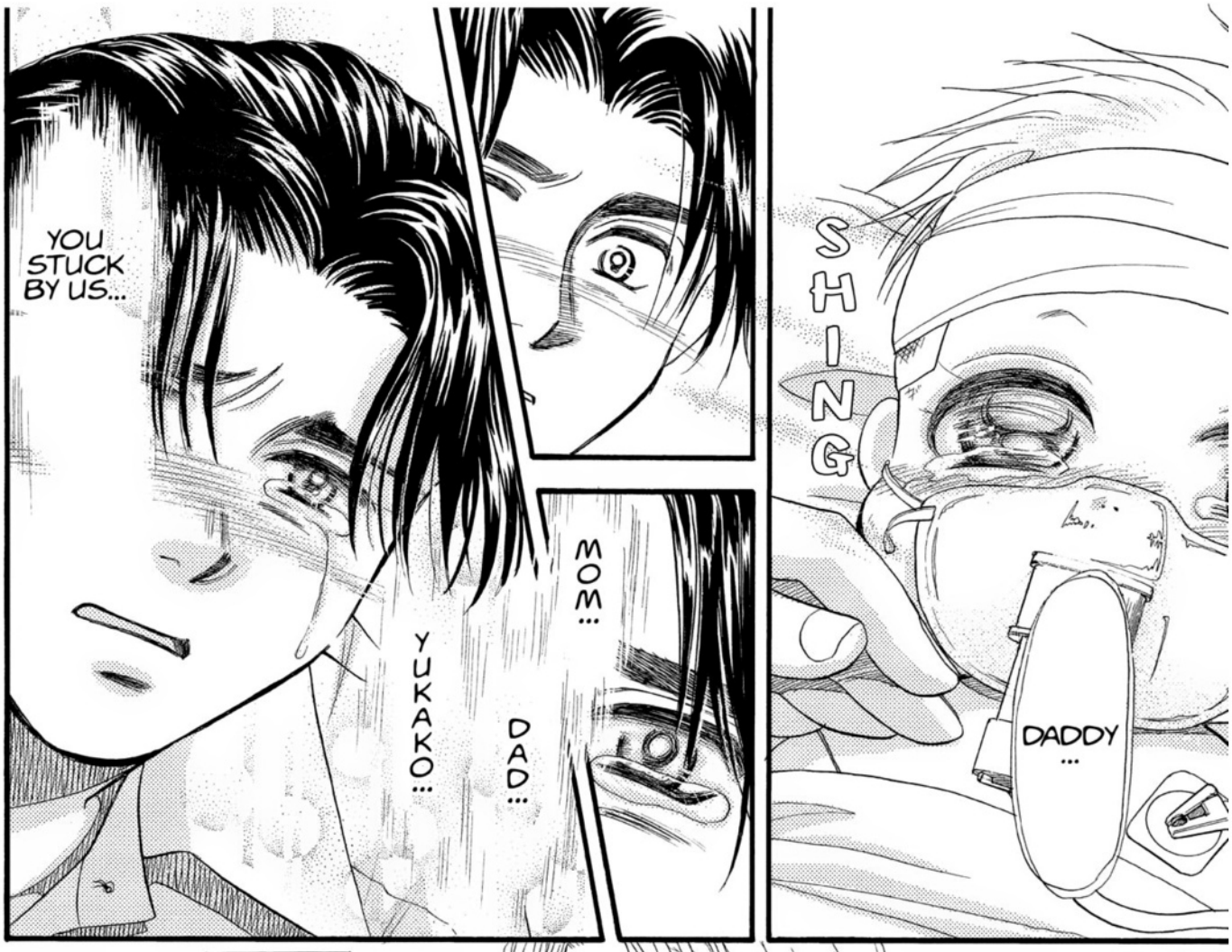

BEEP
BEEP
I THINK...
...A MIRACLE...
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
...JUST HAP-PENED!
MINORU...
MINORU...
!
DO YOU HEAR THAT?
HE'S CALLING TO YOU, MINORU.
MOMMY?


...YA.
TAKUYA.
TWITCH
MOM WAS HERE ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?
... JUST NOW.
...
WOOSH
ICU
HAAA

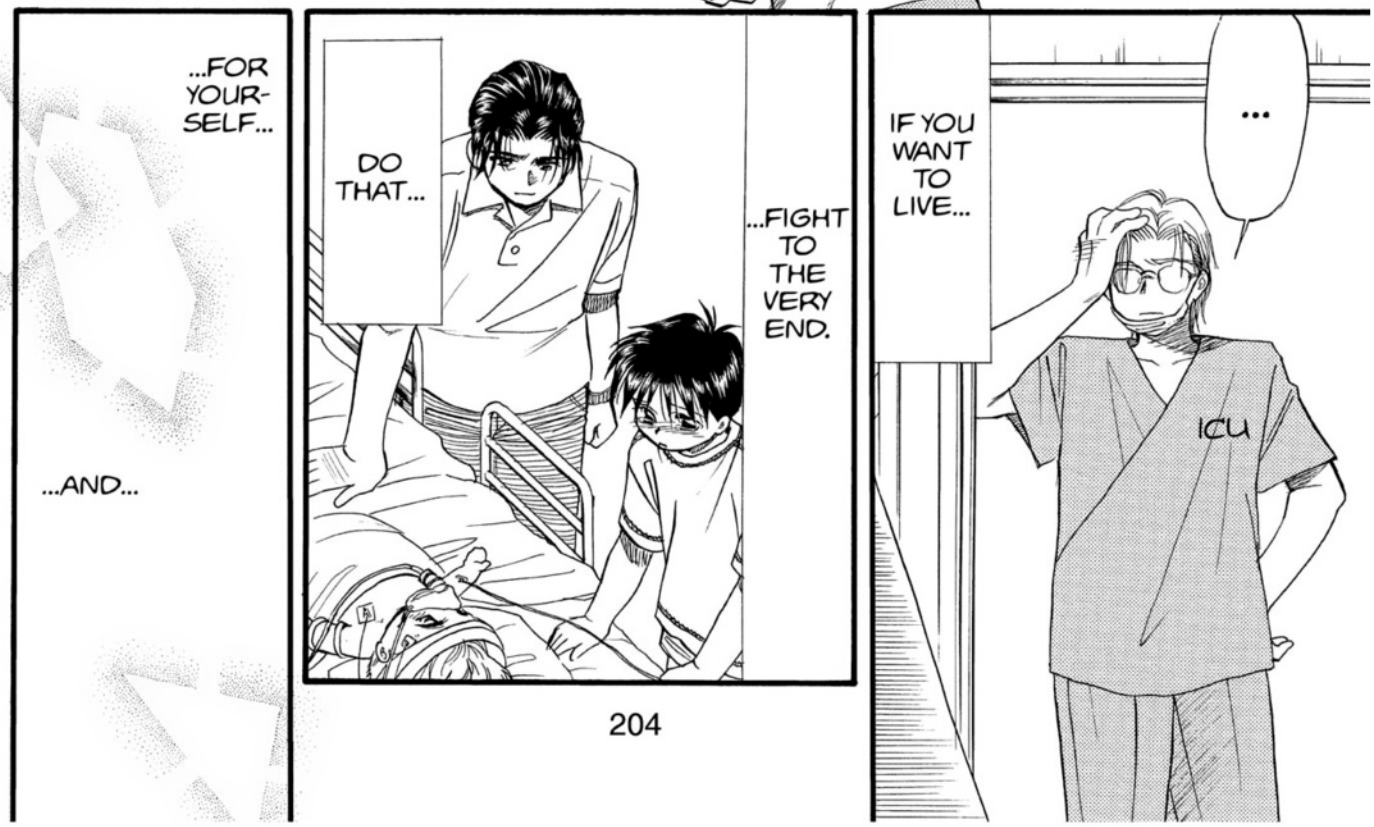
BEEP
...WAS STRONGER THAN I EVER IMAGINED.
BEEP
YUKI...
MINORU'S...
...WILL TO LIVE...
HRR
BWAZA...
ALUA
TWITCH
...
HRR
S... SOWWY...
I SOWWY...

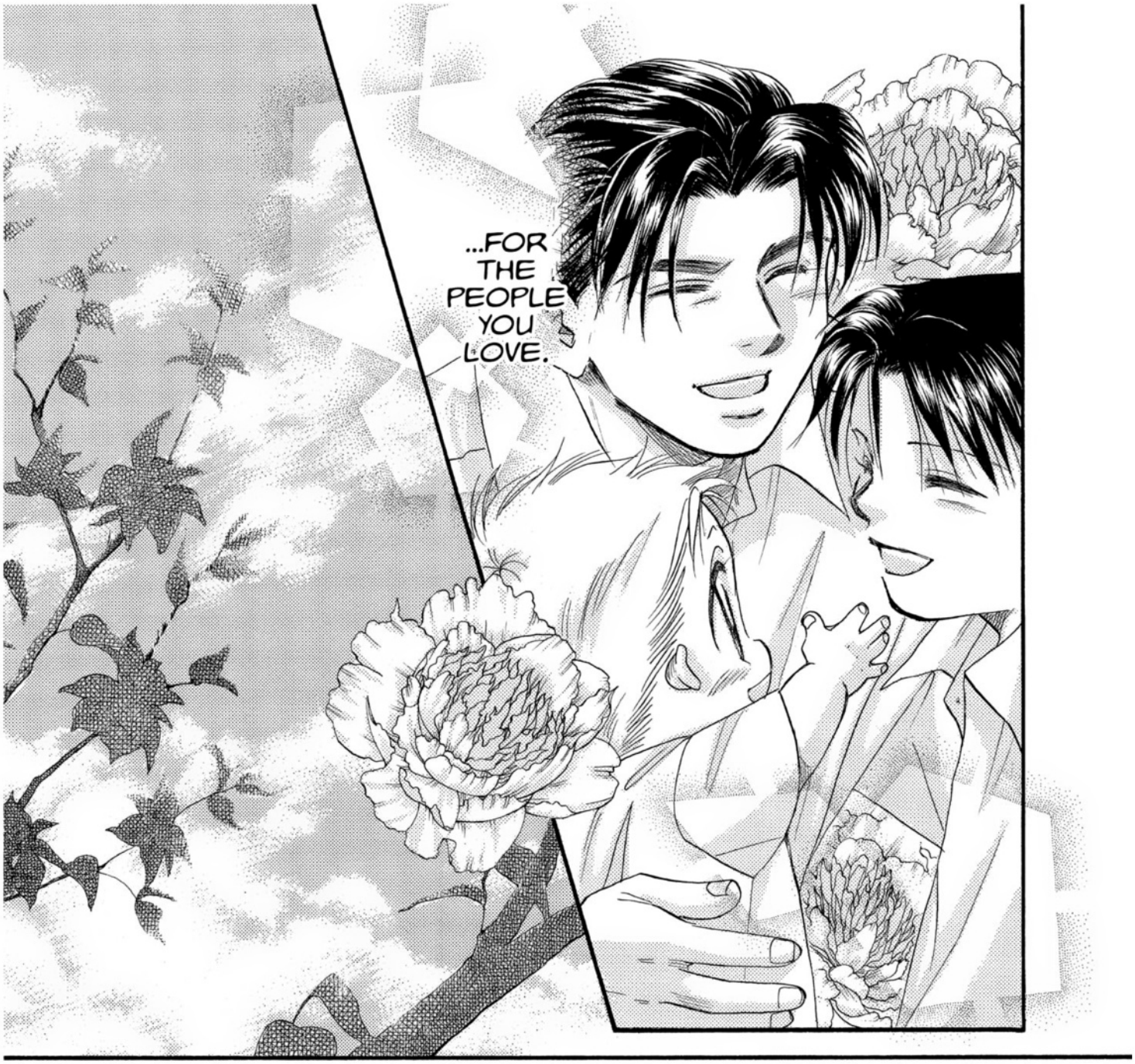
PLUP
UNH...
AH...
EVERY-THING'S BLURRY.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
...
I CAN'T...
...SEE ANY-THING...
...AT ALL.
AAAH.

AAH.
UNH.
SOB
WAAH!
MINORU!
MINORU!
WAAAAH
AAAH
SOB
SOB
SOB
MINORU...
SWF

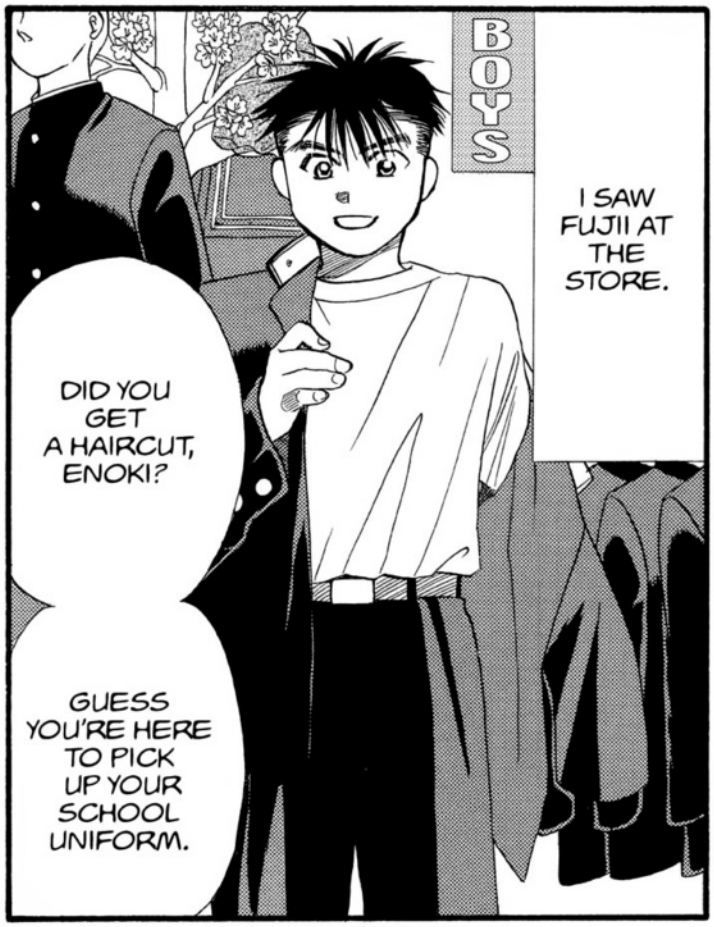


...THROUGH IT ALL.



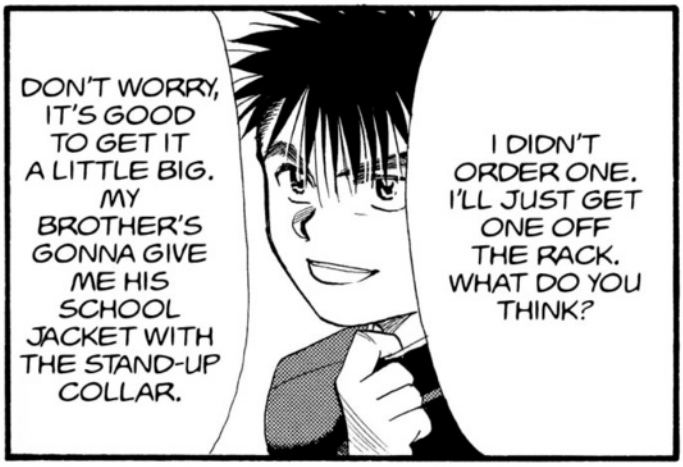


EPILOGUE


BOYS
I SAW FUJII AT THE STORE.
DID YOU GET A HAIRCUT, ENOKI?
GUESS YOU'RE HERE TO PICK UP YOUR SCHOOL UNIFORM.

WE GREETED THE NEW YEAR, THEN THE SPRING.
MINORU COMPLETELY RECOVERED FROM HIS INJURIES AND IS DOING FINE.
HUH?

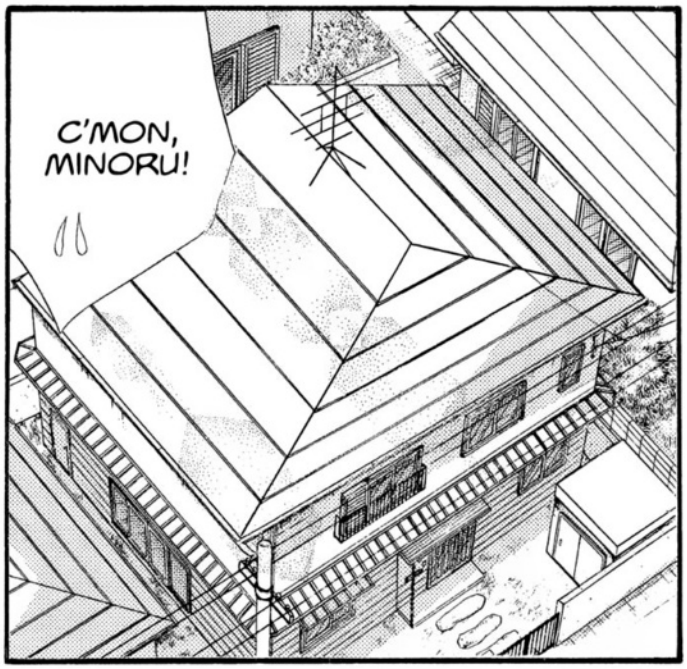
TAMADATE WAS WAITING IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE.
HEY, ENOKI. MY NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM ARRIVED TODAY.
I WANTED YOU TO SEE MY FABULOUS NEW LOOK.
I'M SO SORRY WE WON'T BE GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL.
I'M GOING TO A PRIVATE SCHOOL INSTEAD.


I DIDN'T ORDER ONE. I'LL JUST GET ONE OFF THE RACK. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
DON'T WORRY, IT'S GOOD TO GET IT A LITTLE BIG. MY BROTHER'S GONNA GIVE ME HIS SCHOOL JACKET WITH THE STAND-UP COLLAR.

Sister Akemi
SEE YOU!
YOU SHOULD GET A SIZE UP, AKIHIRO.
I HOPE WE'LL BE IN THE SAME CLASS AGAIN IN JUNIOR HIGH.
YOU'LL GROW OUT OF THAT ONE.

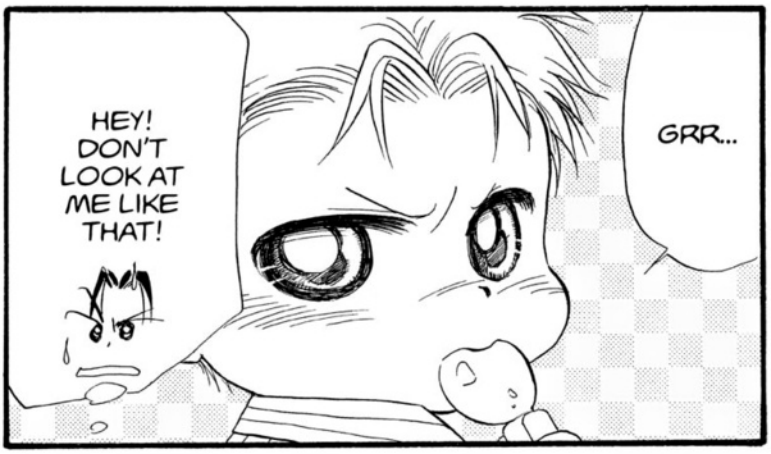
I'LL MAKE A FEAST TO CELEBRATE YOUR ENTRANCE INTO JUNIOR HIGH!
YOU'RE HAPPY FOR ME TOO, RIGHT? THANKS, BUDDY!
HEE
TAKUYA, LISTEN TO THIS! I'M GONNA BE HEAD CHEF!
WAAH
COOL, HUH? DON'T GET TOO EXCITED NOW, MINORU.
OH, THAT STUPID SCHOOL FOR SPOILED RICH KIDS, RIGHT?
THE SHIRAI-ZUMI SCHOOL.
PRIVATE SCHOOL? WHICH ONE?
I HEAR MORIGUCHI'S GOING TO THE SHUMON SCHOOL. THAT'S COOL, BUT I'LL MISS HIM.
GON'S LEG
SWUFF
SWUFF
GON AND I PROMISED TO SHOW EACH OTHER OUR NEW SCHOOL UNIFORMS.
THIS COLLAR FEELS WEIRD.
TA-DA!
SO? ARE YOU DRESSED, TAKUYA? I'LL COUNT TO THREE.
FUJII PROBABLY FEELS THE SAME WAY. HE JUST WON'T SAY SO.
ONE ...
... TWO...
...THREE!

YOUR UNIFORM FITS FINE, GON.
YEAH, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
His face doesn't show his age.
YOU LOOK GOOD.
IT DOESN'T FIT TOO WELL.
HA HA HA
I KNEW IT.
MINORU, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HUH?
THE OLDER GIRLS ARE GONNA EAT YOU UP.
HEY.
OH...
WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY ARE YOU BLUSHING, HIRO?
HEY, LOOK AT ME.
BLUSH
BDMP
BDMP


C'MON, MINORU!

IF YOU DON'T HURRY, WE'LL BE LATE FOR TAKUYA'S ENTRANCE CEREMONY!
WHY ARE YOU TAKING SO LONG TO EAT?
NO!
I HUNGWY!

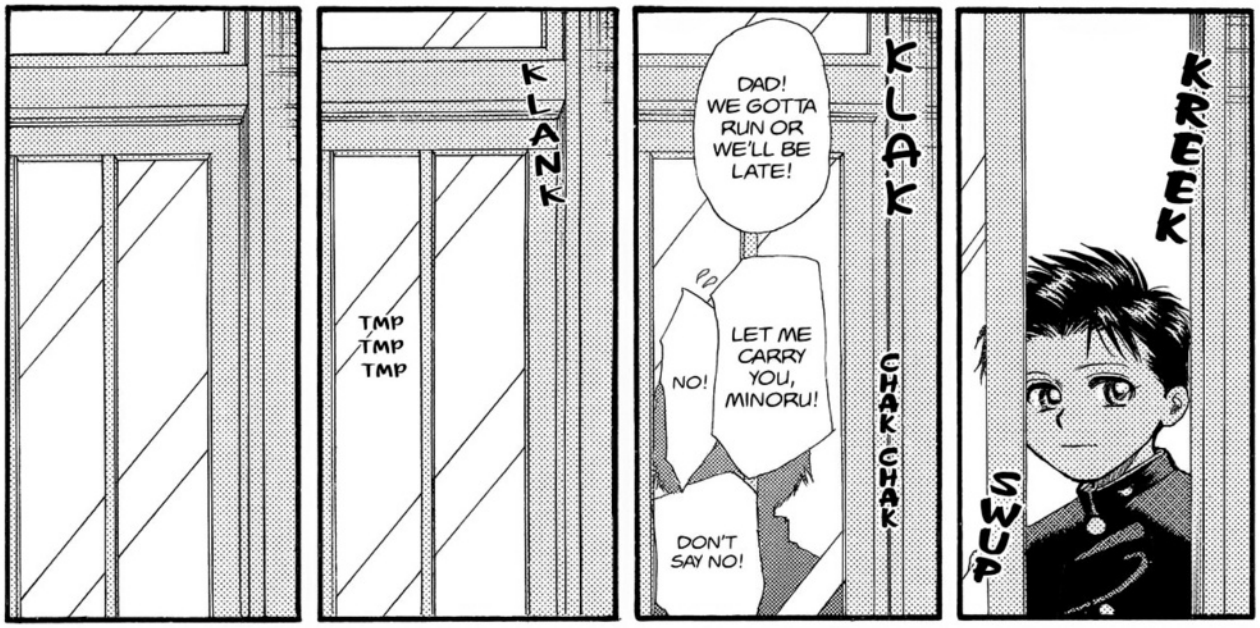
STOP BEING STUBBORN AND PUT YOUR SHIRT ON!


HEY! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!
GRR...

No!
TING
Hurry up!
GEEZ. THEY'RE SO NOISY.

GRANDPA...
GRANDMA...
MOM...
THIS NEW BAG FEELS WEIRD. I'M USED TO BACK-PACKS.
YOU'LL GET USED TO IT BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.
His pants are too long.
UNH!
UNH!
TAKUYA!
MINORU'S FINALLY READY!
OKAY!
I'M STARTING JUNIOR HIGH TODAY.
WATCH OUT FOR ME, OKAY?
BOW

GOOD-BYE!
GOO'BYE!
PLINK



HAVE A GREAT DAY.

Baby & Me / The End

Sunday, May 25, 1997
I'm working on the final chapter of Baby & Me, but it's not going smoothly and I'm so tired. My sketches aren't great either. I don't even have half of the pages finished yet. I don't think my art will be finished before the assistants arrive. I'm very irritated and I feel powerless because I'm so sleepy. I just ate some udon noodles and dried sardines for calcium. I can't stand the way my sketches look!

Monday, May 27
It's 2:00 a.m. Boo-hoo-hoo! Nine more hours until the assistants show up. I have ten more pages of drafts. So sleepy. I'd love to take a bath. My hand hurts! I just noticed that all the faces I've been drawing are crying.

Thursday, May 29
This is the third day with the assistants. As expected, they're all getting sleepy. I'm sleepy too. As I predicted, my drafts aren't finished yet. Arrgh...

Saturday, May 31
This morning my manager quietly handed me a bottle of vitamin drink. I can never tell if stuff like that really works, but I guess it can't hurt.
I finished my roughs today. Another assistant joined us. There are five assistants in this room. That's the most I've ever had.
I'm kind of impressed. But one of them will go home tonight.

Sunday, June 1
The layout was supposed to be finished today, but it seemed impossible, so I told the assistants I needed them to work for me one more day. They all agreed without complaining.

Monday, June 2
Last night we finished the layout. All the pain suddenly disappeared. The assistants were celebrating, and I tried to do the same. It was a long haul.

Wednesday, July 30
I finished the layout for *Itsudemo Otenki Kibun* this morning. I slept until evening. It's been approximately two months since I finished work on Baby & Me, and I've started to feel nostalgic about it. There were lots of challenges, and I bottled up a lot of feelings in my heart. But with the passage of time I've calmed down and I feel better about it.
In closing, I'd like to thank my editor, the staff members who helped me with the work...

July 30, 1997
Mari Mo Ragawa

Yes. It continues.

...my friends who supported me emotionally when I was having a rough time, my manager who's been taking care of me since I first began, my readers, my big sister and everybody else!

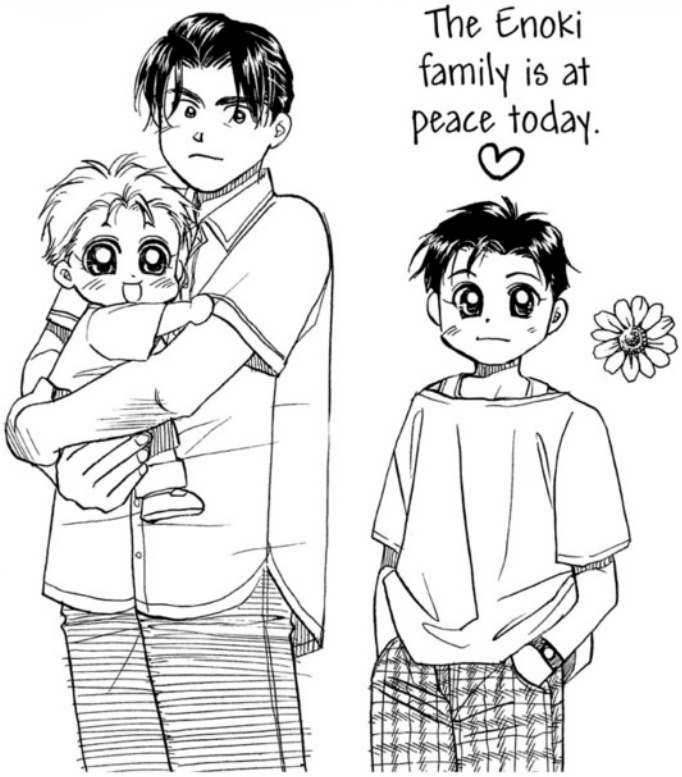
BONUS: BABY & ME, THE SEQUEL

EMPLOYEES OF SOFTWARE PRODUCTION: NOTHING HAS CHANGED. OMORI'S CRUSH CONTINUES.

KUMADE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL. AKIHIRO FUJII IS POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS, THE DUMB KIDS AND MOST OF BOYS. GON IS ON THE SOCCER TEAM.

THE NOISY LITTLE GIRLS ARE ABOUT TO BECOME TEENAGERS. TAMADATE IS WORKING HARD, BUT HE'S SICK OF ALL THE RICH, STUCK-UP STUDENTS AT THE SHIRAIZUMI SCHOOL. MORIGUCHI IS DOING GREAT AT THE SHUMON SCHOOL. HE'S GETTING GOOD GRADES.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING AND ENJOYING BABY & ME.



AUGUST 1, 1997 MARIMO